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THE RIGHT REVEREND

FREDERICK AUGUSTUS BENNETT, C.M.G.

BISHOP OF AOTEAROA.

APPENDIX : PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS.



P R E F A C E .

SUBJECT.

I have chosen as the subject of my thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in history a biographical study of the life and work of the Right Reverend Frederick Augustus Bennett, C.M.G., Bishop of Aotearoa.

In this research I have sought faithfully to delineate the man as he was and as he is today, and to make a fair and just appraisal of his life's work as a Christian leader of the Maori people of New Zealand. For history is really a study of man.

The outstanding racial features of his character and personality, largely derived from his distinguished genealogical background, developed and brought to full maturity by his environment and training, are revealed and portrayed to some extent, I trust, in the text of this narrative; as, also, are the impacts he has made upon both Maori and pakeha society, by reason of his religious faith and teaching, evangelical fervour, leadership in all matters of reform for the betterment of Maori economic and social welfare, and, latterly, by his dignified service to the Church of England in the province of New Zealand, as the first Maori Bishop of Aotearoa.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

In the course of my research I have perused many letters, diary records, diocesan and newspaper reports. I have had the privilege of many conversations and informative interviews with the Bishop, and enjoyed the warm welcome of his family circle at Kohupatiki, Hawke's Bay. I have travelled to many of the localities mentioned, meeting and interviewing many Maori informants who were able to contribute factual evidence of value to my task. Observation and deduction, too, have played their parts.

In my reading I have been guided by reference to many of the works of leading authorities, and my indebtedness to them has been acknowledged in references throughout the text. I regret, however, that many tribal leaders of the Arawa, Ngati-Kahunganu and Ngati Tuwharetoa have already passed away, carrying with them valuable stores of knowledge and folk-lore that may have been of worth to me in this undertaking. For the main part, opinions that I have sought have been fair and unbiassed. I have endeavoured to present a comprehensive and informative assessment of the life-history and work of this first Maori Bishop, who has never ceased to urge and inspire

the mental and spiritual metamorphosis of his kinsfolk who, with their British brethren, have learned to live together as good neighbours in freedom, without strife, in the "Land of the Long White Cloud."

" Let knowledge grow from more to more,
 . But more of reverence in us dwell;
 That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster.

Till the peoples all are one, and all
 their voices blend in choric
Hallelujah to the Maker. "

(Tennyson)

Hoeaera te waka nei,
Hoea, hoea kite pai.
Mate poi e karawhiu
E rahui ite pai.

INTRODUCTION. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

"On from island unto island at the gateways of the day." (Tennyson.)

Probably more than a thousand years before Balboa, the Spaniard, first of Europeans, gazed from a peak in Darien upon the spacious waters of the great Pacific Ocean, the forebears of the Maori people of New Zealand were already in process of migration. From somewhere in the great distance, perhaps from the wide spaces of northern India or the areas beyond, they set out in successive migratory waves towards the east. Later migrants from their legendary Hawaiki moved further and further eastwards.

Long before the Vikings had pushed their sturdy prows towards the coasts of Helluland and Vinland on the North American continent, intrepid Maori navigators and explorers were launching out upon the unknown waters of the Pacific from the region of Cambodia and the Malay Archipelago. Perhaps they sought a more plentiful food supply, perhaps, also, freedom from attack or oppression. Whatever the cause, they were impelled as by some unerring instinct to the islands of their future destiny.

Their exploits upon their trackless way reveal racial qualities of outstanding bravery, superb seamanship, as well as organising and colonising ability of a very high order. Without the aid of chart or compass, they displayed navigational skill that is surely unique in the annals of those "that go down to the sea in ships." Driven by wind and wave in their open canoes, guided by their instinct to adventure, and setting course by the stars, they ultimately peopled the multitude of islands scattered over the eastern Pacific, now known as Polynesia.

Early in the tenth century, Kupe, the Maori explorer, discovered Aotearoa and circumnavigated these islands of beauty and promise. Frequent voyages were made thereafter to Te Ika a Maui and Te Wai Pounamu, until, finally, about the middle of the fourteenth century, the canoes of the fleet assembled to convey the great migration.

Stowed with food and water for the bold adventure, and distinguished by famous names, the great canoes, Arawa, Tainui, Takitimu, Tokomaru, Matatua, Aotea and others, filled with warriors and their women-folk, at intervals set out. Dogs, rats and birds they carried with them, also seeds for crops, for the Maoris were tillers of the soil who had already attained to a primitive agriculture. Moreover, they were true colonisers, for they came to settle and to remain. With them, too, they brought ancestral traditions, folk-lore and colourful customs; above all, the qualities of courage, endurance, enthusiasm and enterprise.

Their tribal establishments revealed communal domestic planning and advanced knowledge of the arts. In the main, they were happy, open-faced, open-minded people who could laugh.

Following their dispersion over the wide lands and hunting-grounds of Aotearoa, inter-tribal warfare developed. With palisades and earth-works they defended their tribal holdings, and thereby displayed considerable knowledge of the military arts. With warfare came slavery, and, for a time, cannibalism marred their picturesque economy. Tribal raids were frequent and persisted far into the nineteenth century.

The first impacts of white civilisation upon the Maori way of life were, naturally, fraught with dangers and difficulties; but the ultimate benefits possible were most far-reaching. The early missionaries to the Maoris quickly realised these facts, particularly the Reverend Samuel Marsden. He came to the Maori people as the herald of the "Good News." Preaching to them for the first time on Christmas Day, 1814, he declared: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." And with the message he brought also the European arts of farm husbandry, education and orderly living. Later, the Maori speech was reduced to writing, and parts of the Bible were translated into Maori.

Following decades of neglect by the British Government to develop and occupy the islands discovered in 1769 by Captain James Cook, the New Zealand Company forced the government to act, by establishing the first British colonists at Port Nicholson on the 22nd. of January, 1840. A week later, Captain William Hobson landed at the Bay of Islands to represent the Queen as Lieutenant Governor. On the 6th. of February, he successfully negotiated with the Maoris the Treaty of Waitangi, a document that is indeed unique in the history of the dealings of white men with coloured.

Under the Treaty, the Maori people were guaranteed full, exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands, all of which they did not occupy, together with the Royal protection as British subjects, whilst they ceded to the Crown all the rights and ^{powers of} sovereignty and the right of pre-emption of their lands at prices to be agreed upon. Thus Maori and pakeha entered into a contract agreement as equal partners for their common benefit and betterment, economically and socially, in the development of the lands entrusted to them both, as colonising peoples.

Although conflict and misunderstanding have sometimes arisen, the Treaty has stood the test of time, and, for the main part, amity between the races has promoted peace with economic prosperity and security. Common service in two World Wars has cemented the bonds of friendship and mutual high regard.

In the democratic fight for freedom against tyranny in World War 2, Maori warriors marched with the New Zealand Division as part of the Eighth Army under General Montgomery, while their brothers flew in the British Air Forces or served in the Royal Navy.

It is significant, therefore, that the subject of this biographical narrative, the first Maori Bishop of the Diocese of Aotearoa, of the lineage of the Arawa tribe, preaching in June, 1948, in that hallowed shrine of British coronations, Westminster Abbey, should declare the same message as did Samuel Marsden in 1814:

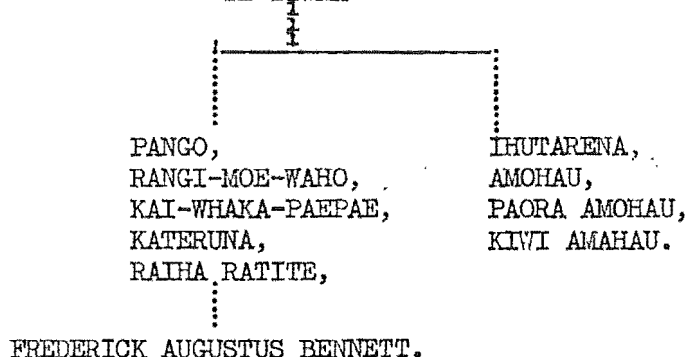
"Behold, I bring you good tidings."

GENEALOGICAL TREE of THE RIGHT REVEREND F.A. BENNETT,

BISHOP of AOTEAROA.

TE ARAWA WAKA.

TAMA-TE-KAPUA, Captain.
KAHU-MATU-MAMOE,
TAMAKE-MOE-TAHANGA,
NENUKU-MAI-RARATONGA,
RANGATIKI,
TUHOURANGI,
NENUKU-KOPAKE,
WHAKANE,
TUTANEKAI,
WHAKIMAIRANGI,
ARI-ARI-TE-RANGI,
TUNAHOPU,
TUMAEKE,
TE TIWHA



A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF
FREDERICK AUGUSTUS BENNETT,
BISHOP OF AOTEAROA.

PREFACE: My reasons for writing this thesis.

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- CHAPTER 2. AT NELSON: THE FORMATIVE YEARS UNDER BISHOP SUTER.
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APPENDIX.

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FREDERICK AUGUSTUS BENNETT,
BISHOP OF AOTEAROA.

CHAPTER 1. CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

"We spend our years as a tale that is told." Ps. 90: 9.

Frederick Augustus Bennett was born on the 18th. of November, 1872, in a wharepuni on the sacred marae of the Arawa tribe, at Ohinemutu, Rotorua. That he was destined for great things as a leader of his Maori people seems to be suggested by the names given to him. He was named Pererika(Frederick) after a leading Christian Chief of the Arawas, who gave the site on which the present church at Ohinemutu stands. In course ^{of time} this chief, long afflicted with cataract, lost an eye, following an operation, and then became convinced "That only the Great Physician could heal him." (1) The name Augustus was given in honour of the great English bishop, George Augustus Selwyn, in whose memorable footsteps he was to follow.

The year of his birth was in the midst of a period of transition for the young colony of New Zealand. A decade of war had just closed, and it has been said that "The wars that lasted ten years set the Maori back fifty years." (2) Julius Vogel, the Colonial Treasurer, had launched his great policy for the rapid promotion of public works with synchronous assisted immigration, based upon State borrowing on a new and unprecedented scale. The rapid increase of the pakeha population, the lavish spending of public money on public works before refrigeration and science had developed a sufficiently large production to promote a prosperous and trustworthy export trade, and unsound methods of banking tended to bring about the set of conditions of temporary boom and ultimate financial crisis and economic loss.

For the Maori people it was indeed a period of dangers and strange new difficulties. They were still in the hunting and agricultural stage, using stone-age implements and weapons. Hitherto, the Maoris had depended mainly upon the bounties of nature and upon their own efforts as tillers of the soil. Economic crises were quite unknown to them. The Maori was inherently industrious, a lover of the soil, and a careful observer of nature's ways and times and seasons. He knew when to plant his crops. He was a skilful craftsman, ingenious and versatile. So Frederick Augustus Bennett was born in a period of unrest, of economic change and transition to production on a large scale. Nevertheless, he was destined to play a leading part in the life of his people.

"Two streams of life converged in the birth of this child. His mother, Raiha Ratiti, a chieftainess of the Arawas, and a direct descendant of Tama te

Kapua, who captained the great Arawa canoe, gave to her son the culture and sense of pride of her race. His father, Thomas Jackson Bennett, was the son of Dr. John Boyle Bennett (3) who had emigrated from Ireland. The latter was born in County Cork in 1808, later graduating M.D., but after some years of practice he turned his attention to journalism. He became editor of "The Watchman", a religious paper, and, in 1849, accepted the editorship of the "New Zealander", published in Auckland. With the true instincts of the pioneer, he set out with his wife and young family to his new field of activity, working with great energy on various social bodies in Auckland. He was keenly interested in the political life of the new community, being one of the closest friends of the late Sir George Grey. He was also president of the Young Men's Christian Association for many years. In 1855, he was appointed Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for the province of Auckland, later becoming Registrar-General for the Colony.

Like his father, T.J. Bennett had a splendid command of the English language, and, throughout his life, he was a keen worker in the Christian field. His eldest son inherited these qualities from him and has brought them to full fruition. Frederick Augustus Bennett bears two names, speaks two languages, and is a compound of two blood streams, equipping him powerfully for his life's work among and for his people.

In accordance with the customs of his tribal ancestors, Frederick Bennett was a child of his people as a whole. He was thus brought up by various other members of the tribal group. From childhood he has spoken both Maori and English with model fluency and resonance. The age-old Maori characteristics of hospitality and generosity, based upon communal cooperation, were imparted to him in large measure, together with abundant folk-lore and tribal tradition.

He recalls vividly his narrow escape from burning in his bed, whilst living with his parents on the northern slopes of Pukeroa hill, Rotorua. The small house was of English design, but built of rushes and kakaho, on the site where the Rotorua hospital now stands. Frederick and his younger brother, Henry Dargaville, were asleep in this house when it caught fire, but both were rescued by the prompt action of a neighbour Maori woman.

AT MAKETU. It was soon after the event just mentioned that Frederick went to live at Maketu, famous as the site where the Arawa canoe had made landfall sometime about 1350. Amidst such surroundings of historical moment to him, he received his first spiritual impressions that were later to blossom and bear fruit in a life dedicated to the religious service of his people.

At this time the Reverend S.M. Spencer was serving the people of the Rotorua-Tarawera district, and he baptised Frederick Bennett. But it was Frederick's Sunday School teacher, Miss Spencer, who played a really important part in the future life of the boy. Despite her crippled condition, her courage and the noble sincerity she displayed in her work left indelible impressions upon the mind of the boy during his formative years.

In the late 'seventies, Maketu was very populous. Everyone there lived within the pa, its picturesque whares of raupo and wi-wi being linked by narrow pathways. At that time there were no timber houses in the pa. Even the large meeting-houses, with their characteristic carvings, were all built of native materials. Today there are no native houses, but wooden constructions built in pakeha styles.

Frederick Bennett loved the childhood days spent at Maketu, for there he learned so much from the other members of the great tribal family. Each morning the church bell called the people of the settlement to worship, and so well had they been evangelised, that the members of the congregation read the lessons, a verse by one and then another. So it would continue. This custom encouraged the bringing of Bibles to the place of worship and enabled the readers to prove their progress.

No road joined Maketu to Tauranga at that time. Food and other needs were brought in to Maketu by boats entering the little harbour at high tide. Since then, the harbour has silted up and access is very difficult. But it was on this harbour that Frederick learned the arts of swimming and surfing and the handling of canoes. To attain the status of swimmer, the aspirant was required to swim from the beach to the rock, Tokoparore, at the entrance, and then back to shore. Tradition says that Tokoparore was the anchorage of the Arawa canoe.

ENTRANCE TO St. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE.

On returning to Rotorua, Frederick attended the school at Ohinemutu, erected near the Utukika bridge on the Tauranga road. Although established as a native school, several pakeha children also attended. Frederick was an enthusiastic and able student, as his school career revealed. In 1883, he gained a scholarship enabling him to attend St. Stephen's College in Auckland. The ideals of this institution are inscribed upon its foundation stone:

- " A school for religious education, industrial training and
- " instruction in the English language for the children of both
- " races in New Zealand and the Islands of the Pacific.
- " Founded in 1848 at Tauranga, Auckland, together with like schools
- " at Kohanga, Hopu, Horu, Punu, by George Augustus Selwyn, Bishop
- " of New Zealand. Moved to this site in the year 1930."

At St. Stephen's a new world was opened up to the young boy, and, in recalling the influences affecting him at that time, Bishop Bennett refers particularly to the spiritual encouragement gained by him from personal contact with Archdeacon Maunsell, Archdeacon Clarke and other missionaries among the Maori people. At that time, Archdeacon Maunsell was in charge of St. Mary's Cathedral. He was also chaplain of St. Stephen's, and he spoke the Maori language with remarkable fluency. The clergy of the Auckland Diocese were accustomed to meet once annually at St. Stephen's, being accommodated at the school. Thus Frederick Bennett came into close contact with all the missionaries working in the Auckland district. One of the main joys of his life there was to attend service at St. Mary's on Sundays. Another formative factor was the inculcation of discipline at the school, the boarding establishment being under the control of an ex-Army sergeant named Smith; and Frederick learned his disciplinary lessons well whilst there.

AT TE WAIROA.

Returning to Rotorua in 1884, Frederick Bennett pursued his studies at Te Wairoa, a little village on the shore of lake Tarawera. There he met Mr. James Pope, Inspector of Native Schools, a man of lofty principles, who sought for the Maori people a higher and better way of life, as his books and pamphlets testify. His book, "Health for the Maori", was regarded as a valuable guide to Maori welfare. James Pope loved the Maori people and he made a deep and lasting impression upon Frederick Bennett's mind.

Te Wairoa was the Haurangi tribal centre. Members of the tribe derived economic gain from the tourist traffic to the Rotomahana or pink and white terraces on the other side of the lake, transporting passengers in their canoes to see the splendour of those wonderful formations. But the moral results were far from satisfactory. There were two hotels there, one of which was licensed. Liquor was consumed both on and off the premises, and even on the village marae. To the simple natives of Te Wairoa the results accruing from alcohol and other pakeha vices were disastrous. So a temperance organisation was formed, and Frederick Bennett, at the age of fourteen years, became its secretary. He clearly saw the evils of alcoholic liquors upon the life of his people, and he then declared war upon it that he has continued to wage throughout his life. Regular meetings of the temperance society were held in a hall close by the tribal meeting house, known as Hine Mihi. Thereafter, it was not infrequent for visitors to and from the terraces to attend these temperance meetings. On one occasion two outstanding churchmen, Bishop Suter and the Rev. F.W. Chatterton, both of Nelson, were present.

Frederick Bennett, the bi-lingual secretary of the temperance society, was the one qualified to act as interpreter. His enunciation and vocal tone qualities immediately attracted the visitors, Bishop Suter and the Rev. Chatterton, especially during the singing of the hymn, "Otirawa". When the meeting was over they tried to meet the lad, but he had gone. The bishop and his companion continued their journeys, the one to Auckland, the other to Wanganui. But Bishop Suter did not forget the effect of Frederick Bennett's singing upon him. It seemed to conjure up all his hopes and ideals for the Maori people, above all, the tremendous possibilities inherent in this bi-lingual lad of fourteen, dedicated to the future service of his people. So a fortnight later, Bishop Suter returned to Te Wairoa, determined to find the lad.

The little church at Te Wairoa is erected on high ground overlooking Lake Tarawera. The site was called Hiona (Zion) and the church was built by the Maoris themselves from timber sawn in the local pits. Frederick Bennett attended this church regularly. Services were held at the church each Sunday and, during the week, at the meeting house, owned by the famous Maori guide, Sophia. Visiting clergy officiated at the services, so that Bishop Suter took the evening service on Sunday, when he returned to Te Wairoa. He found Frederick Bennett ringing the bell for the service, and, later, as it proceeded, noticed that the boy was standing by the door without a book. He beckoned the lad to come forward to share his book, and, when the hymn was concluded, he asked the boy to wait and speak to him after the service. It was then that Bishop Suter explained his return visit to Te Wairoa, telling Frederick that, if his parents consented, he would like to take him to Nelson for his further education. The boy was thrilled at the prospect. It seemed to him like going to a new world. As it was necessary for him to visit his parents in Rotorua, Frederick set out to obtain their consent, walking the twelve miles that night. Their consent was obtained, and on the Wednesday following he was proudly riding in the mail coach by the side of Bishop Suter. The journey to Wellington occupied several days, and it was at Napier, on the third day, that the bishop telegraphed to Mr. Chatterton at Wellington, requesting him to meet "Otirawa" and himself on a certain date. Not knowing the boy's name, Mr. Chatterton would recognise the identity and meaning of Otirawa.

From Wellington the three crossed to Nelson in the steamer "Penguin". The trip was rough, and thoughts of home surged into the boy's mind. When Nelson was reached, Bishop Suter took Frederick to Bishopdale, his residence, where he immediately called his friends to the chapel to hear the boy sing "Otirawa."

The lad sang the first lines satisfactorily, but, on reaching the refrain, memories of home took possession of him, and he broke down and wept, as he now laughingly recalls.

As Frederick imagined, Nelson was an exciting new world to him, for there he entered into an entirely new environment through the door of opportunity thus opened wider to him by his future guide and spiritual mentor, the serene and venerable Bishop Suter.

Like Paracelsus, Frederick Bennett might then have said:

" I go to prove my soul!

" I see my way as birds their trackless way--

" I shall arrive! In some time, his good time, I shall arrive!

" He guides me and the bird. In his good time."

(Browning.)

REFERENCES:

- (1) Extract from Journal written by Mrs. T.S. Grace in 1878:
"A Pioneer Missionary Among the Maoris", p. 291.
- (2) James Cowan: "The Maori Yesterday and Today", p. 15.
- (3) Dictionary of N.Z. Biography.

AT NELSON. THE FORMATIVE YEARS UNDER BISHOP SUTER.

Andrew Burn Suter, D.D., Bishop of Nelson, was a man of vigorous character, mellowed and refined by surpassing humility and abundant tact. He was elected to the Bishopric of Nelson in 1866, thus arriving in New Zealand during a period of disturbance and unrest. The recent gold discoveries on the West Coast, in Nelson and Otago, had led to a great influx of miners and neer-do-wells from Australia, California and elsewhere, all seeking to make their fortunes by fair means or foul. The Maori Wars continued to wage in various districts of the North Island, and Christianity was generally losing ground amongst the Maori people.

Bishop Suter desired to see the two races united in a common devotion to one God, to the elimination of conflict and bloodshed. So he worked vigorously and successfully in the rough mining settlements of the West Coast, as well as in the more sheltered valleys of his own province. He saw in education the really effective instrument for the attainment of his ideal. Then came the abolition of the provinces in 1876 and the establishment of the central Government at Wellington. The Church of England at that time was largely ineffective as a political force, and its weakness was particularly felt in the sphere of education. It was then that Bishop Suter and Archdeacon Harper of Westland determined to stand firmly together in the cause of a better educational system. Cooperating with the Roman Catholic community, they established in their respective districts "An effective and successful system of denominational schools." (1)

Bishop Suter established a theological training school at his home in Nelson, which Mr. H.T. Purchas has described as "An institution of great importance, the studies being systematised and tested by a Board of Theological Studies, whose operations cover the whole province and whose standard is equal to that of the Mother Church." (2)

Bishopdale was a beautiful old-fashioned building, one end of which was the Bishop's residence, the other being occupied by the theological students. Frederick Bennett was placed under the special supervision of the Rev. F.W. Chatterton. Until 1890, he attended the Bishop's school in Nelson, the headmaster being Mr. James Harkness, B.A. He then proceeded to Nelson College where he became a prefect and a member of the first fifteen. He made commendable progress in his scholastic and sporting activities, whilst preparing for his real life's work. The peaceful environment of Bishopdale served to strengthen his earlier enthusiasm to enter the priesthood. He sang in the Nelson Cathedral choir, and became a member of All Saints' Church, joining the Bible class and later becoming a teacher in the Sunday school.

He loved his life at Bishopdale and revered his father by adoption, Bishop Suter. He made many friendships which were to last throughout life. But he also experienced mental unrest. He felt an urgent call to undertake really constructive work, to do something truly worth while for his people. Was he the vessel fit for the task? Was he the chosen instrument? Was he adequately prepared? He felt his call of duty was to extend the Kingdom of Christ amongst the Maori people.

In 1889 Bishop Suter went to England, and the correspondence between the bishop and Frederick at that time reveals the fellowship and close understanding that existed between the father and the son in the faith. Frederick was obviously disturbed about the prospect of the future and its indefiniteness, also about his own fitness and adequacy of preparation in readiness for it. He, therefore, wrote to the bishop and sought his advice. The bishop's reply was:

May 25th., 1889.

" My dear Fred.,

You have asked me to let you know what I thought
 " would be your best course as to the future and what I propose to
 " do with you. I shall be glad to help you to go on as I have done,
 " and although it is a little early to speak decidedly yet, I should
 " be very glad if your progress in your work should be such as to
 " justify my thinking you would make a really useful minister.

I should prefer this for you, and so far you have
 " done well towards it, and I think if you study hard and perseveringly
 " you will be able to gain a good position and one of usefulness.

In these days a minister's position is one of a leader,
 " but it is one which requires a great deal of preparation and self-
 " denying study. Your general conduct is all I can wish, and you have
 " made yourself many friends by your unselfishness and thoughtfulness
 " of conduct.

Believe me

Your sincere friend,

(sgd.) A.B. Suter, Bishop. "

Returning from England the following year, the bishop discussed in greater detail the plans for Frederick's prospective career. Shortly after decisions were reached, Bishop Suter suffered a stroke that forced him to resign his charge in 1891. This was a sorry blow, and Frederick Bennett felt its weight severely. He assisted Mrs. Suter in waiting upon the Bishop and successfully prevailed where others failed in administering his medicine.

At the General Synod held in Wellington on the 9th. of February, 1892, Archdeacon Mules paid tribute to the character and work of this great man.

The Synod placed on record "Its sense of the great services rendered to the "Church of New Zealand, and especially to the Diocese of Nelson by the late "Bishop of that Diocese, the Right Reverend Andrew Burn Suter, D.D., and begs "to assure Mrs. Suter of its profound sympathy with her in the critical state "of her husband's health." (3)

In rising to speak to the resolution, Archdeacon Mules said:

" Not only had the province sustained a serious loss, and the
 " Diocese of Nelson, but I have lost my dearest personal friend.
 " Regarding the excellence of his work, I cannot help feeling
 " that it was very difficult for anyone, except for those about
 " him, to obtain any accurate knowledge of his work, and this led,
 " doubtless to his being often misunderstood. (x x x . . .)
 " In thinking over his character, the quality which appears to stand
 " out most prominently was the affectionate nature of his disposition.
 " He seemed as if he found it difficult to give expression to the
 " feelings of regard and affection he entertained, and that nothing
 " could adequately express these. I never came across anyone in my
 " whole life with such unbounded generosity of character. It is
 " difficult to give any idea of his care and thought for those candidates
 " for Holy Orders which were received into his house. A lover of
 " natural history himself, he frequently had some specimen on the
 " table at dinner or tea, and would promote discussion amongst them
 " on the subject; and he would collect things to enlarge their state
 " of knowledge, things which, otherwise, they would have known nothing
 " about. Thus their affection was gained. He did not rule by force
 " of character, nor by moral pressure. He did not drive, he led. "

Such, then, was the man who guided Frederick Bennett during his most important formative years. The friendship, serenity, tolerance and understanding wisdom of Bishop Suter moulded and developed the high qualities in the young candidate for the ministry, enabling him not only to aspire but to attain.

Whilst still attending Nelson College, Frederick Bennett prepared himself for his future work by travelling with the Rev. Chatterton to take Sunday services at various outlying Maori settlements. Once a month they visited Wakapuaka, where Houria Matenga, known as the Grace Darling of New Zealand, lived. She had been instrumental in saving the lives of those aboard the ship "~~Delaware~~" which was wrecked there some time before. During these journeys, Frederick translated extracts from the Bible for the instruction of Mr. Chatterton.

But the call to return to his own people now became urgent to Frederick. His love for them was the compelling motive. He did not want to lose touch with his racial heritage of custom, language and tradition. In a pakeha environment he was in danger of losing even the facility of his native tongue. He felt that the bonds required to be strengthened and his associations renewed. So he accepted a post at Putiki in 1893, as lay-reader under the Rev. A.O. Williams, who was in charge of the Maori mission station at Putiki, in the Wanganui district.

REFERENCES:

- (1) H.T. Purohas: "The English Church in New Zealand", p. 217.
- (2) Ibid. p. 232.
- (3) Records of the General Synod, February, 1892.

PREPARATION AND TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY:PUTIKI AND NELSON.RISE OF THE YOUNG MAORI PARTY.PUTIKI.

At Putiki, the little Maori village situated on the east bank of the Wanganui River, tasks awaited the young novitiate, Frederick Bennett, that immediately enlisted all his interest and enthusiasm. Although many Maoris in the surrounding district had embraced Roman Catholicism, Putiki was staunch in its support of the Church of England. Within the pa he organised a choir and by his service quickly earned the devotion and high esteem of the people.

Interviewed at Putiki on December 3rd., 1947, Mr. M. Takarangi, one of the elders of the tribe, stated that he clearly recalled the arrival of Frederick Bennett at that settlement in 1893, and said:

" Fred. Bennett, as he was known to us, was so impressive
" and so versed in the language of his ancestors that he
" instantly gained the respect of all the Maoris of the
" district. Wherever he went he was welcomed by the
" Maori people. His oratory was so outstanding, and to
" him no task was too difficult. Whenever he heard of a
" sick Maori, he would cover even great distances to visit
" and to carry spiritual comfort." (1)

It was his wish that the Maori youth of that day and of future generations should be privileged to receive the educational advantages that had meant so much to him. So he called a meeting of all the Maori people of Putiki to consider ways and means whereby the desired end could be achieved. His proposal to collect money for the erection of a school immediately won enthusiastic approval, and concerts staged by the choir he had formed provided a serviceable fund with which to start. The school was built in 1894, and served in the education of the youth of this Maori village for more than forty years. Many important Maori leaders in Wanganui received their primary education at that school. .

Meanwhile, he was busy also with his theological studies. He completed grades 1 and 2 whilst serving at Putiki, a period of two years. Moreover, lasting friendships were formed at Wanganui. Especially did he value the real companionship of such worthy men as the Reverends A.O. Williams and Basil Taylor. As a result of these associations, he experienced what seemed to be a Divine call to the work of the ministry. The period of probation and self-examination was over.

NELSON. So he returned to Nelson at the end of 1894, once more to become a resident at Bishopdale, this time, however, as a theological student, under the direction of Bishop Mules. The happy associations of the former days were renewed. After a year of concentrated work, he completed his L. Th., being ordained Deacon on the 24th. of August, 1896, and Priest on 1st. November, 1897.

THE OFFICE OF PRIEST.

After his ordination, he assisted with the spiritual welfare service at the Mission Hall in the Port of Nelson, and attended to the religious needs of some five to six hundred Maoris throughout the Nelson district. This task of evangelising his own people was indeed a major one. For many, contact with whites had meant deterioration and for some disaster. There were unmistakable signs of moral and physical decay, whereas, normally, the Maori was physically strong and morally high. Deceived by the bad example of some unworthy pakehas, the Maoris were inclined to be distrustful of the efforts of pakeha ministers. Being a Maori, the Reverend F.A. Bennett was able to overcome many contrary prejudices on the part of his people.

Some of the Maori settlements of the Nelson Diocese were very remote. The following statement, published in October, 1897, is revealing:

" For many years it has been impossible to minister to them,
" although efforts have been made at various times to try to
" secure the services of a Native catechist or evangelist who
" should travel about from place to place and give them such
" instruction as was possible. The diocese has been fortunate
" enough for the last twelve months to have the services of the
" Rev. F.A. Bennett, who has given a considerable amount of
" @ time (in addition to other work) in visiting the Maoris scattered
" through the northern part of the diocese at Motueka, Takaka,
" Canvastown, Croixelles, Blenheim and Picton." (2)

The work confronting him was indeed difficult. The area of service was wide and the settlements scattered. He assisted the Rev. F.W. Chatterton with the work at the Port Mission Hall, and organised choral work within the church there. The duties required energy, enthusiasm, faith. The average Maori showed little awareness of his own personal need of salvation. To the Maoris of the Nelson district Christianity appeared to have lost much of its evangelical missionary meaning. It had again to become dynamic, charged with the Divine Authority. Perhaps the fact that the Church Missionary Society had confined its efforts to the North Island had contributed to this southern inertia. Whatever the cause, the fact was that the Maori people of the South Island were in sorry plight. Mormonism had invaded the territory, and, at one place which he visited in 1897, the Rev. Bennett was greeted as follows:

" Don't come here again. Your church has never taken
" the slightest interest in us. The Mormons have come
" and shown an interest in us, and now it is not right
" that you who left us all alone should come now and interfere." (3)

Unfortunately, the indictment was true. Nevertheless, if he could make no headway with the older Maoris, he felt and knew that he could deal effectively with the youth of the diocese. So he proceeded to establish Sunday schools and Bible classes. The response was encouraging and the attendances gratifying. The work was arduous, but rewards came, as the following published comment indicates:

" His earnestness and eloquence could not fail to impress
" his hearers, who have probably rarely heard the Gospel
" preached in their native tongue with such power. " (4)

This referred to one of his services at the village of Waikawa (Bitter Water.)

He promoted the building of a church at Motueka and a school at Croixelles, the latter effort being substantially benefited by funds resulting from the tour in 1897 of the first Rugby fifteen from Te Aute College. Croixelles was an isolated spot, but, in the surrounding district, Mormonism had become firmly entrenched. Croixelles was intended to become a pivotal point in the Rev. Bennett's counter attack against Mormonism, in his fight against false and misleading doctrines.

Much time and thoughtful preparation had preceded the building of the church at Motueka, which was opened on May 6th., 1897. It was a lovely structure, embodying something of the Rev. Bennett's conception of a beautiful and fit edifice to meet the spiritual needs of the Maori people of that lovely district. It is appropriate at this point of the narrative to mention that, on the attainment of his jubilee marking fifty years' service since his ordination, the sons of the Bishop of Aotearoa presented to the Motueka church a beautifully carved altar as their memorial gift to the church and people of the district, in honour of their father and of his work there.

The task of serving faithfully the outlying settlements of his wide field necessitated much journeying and called for great physical endurance. He used a bicycle for areas near to Nelson, but a horse and buggy were needed for the longer distances, as when visiting Kaikoura and Westland. On such trips he would carry a tent, which he would pitch at nightfall, resuming his journey soon after daybreak.

Meanwhile, he engaged in many social activities, ~~his~~ his accomplishments as a singer leading to a considerable demand for his contribution to various programmes. He organised all the choral work at All Saints', and was also a

member of the Harmonic Society and of the Photographic Club. His photographic studies, gathered during his many and varied trips, have many times been used as slides to illustrate several of his lectures and addresses throughout New Zealand.

THE YOUNG MAORI PARTY.

In February, 1897, the Rev. Bennett visited the North Island in order to spend a brief time with his own people in Rotorua, and to attend a Conference of the Young Maori Party at Te Aute Boys' College in Hawke's Bay. In order to appreciate the aims and objects of this movement, a brief review of the events and circumstances which led to its formation will here be opportune.

During the early 'nineties New Zealand statistics of population revealed a very serious decline in the numbers of the Maori race. Various contributory factors were in operation. Pakeha immigration had brought physical diseases previously unknown amongst the Maoris, who had not the bodily resistance due to partial immunisation. Changes in clothing and diet and manner of life also played their parts. Tubercular trouble and chest weakness thus tended to afflict the Maori.

Certain observers, interested in the real welfare of the Maori race, deplored their rapid decline in numbers and in general physique. They realised that these tendencies were, unfortunately, generally associated with the early years of contact between white and coloured races. Such men as Archdeacon Walsh had pointed to the possible passing out of existence of the Maori race. On the other hand, Dr. A.K. Newman, in 1881, said:

" Taking all things into consideration, the disappearance of
" the (Maori) race is scarcely a subject for much regret.
" They are dying out in a quick easy way and are being supplanted
" by a superior race. " (5)

But there was something deeper than mere physical decline adversely affecting the Maori and promoting his decay. Whilst the Church Missionary Society in the early days did much for the welfare of the Maori, it also tended to cut away from under his feet many things upon which the Maori had based his personal and social security. In the past, the Chief had been the paramount figure in the tribal group, and the Rev. Colenso maintained that the whole native social system tended to disintegrate by taking away the special privileges attaching to the Chief in accordance with custom, e.g. polygamy and slavery. Nevertheless, Christianity did much for the betterment of the Maori. It stemmed the ravages of war, promoted honesty and security against plundering, and generally cushioned him against the adverse impacts of the white population.

The rapid growth of the white population synchronously with the rapid decline of his own numbers and the extent of his land-holding, tended to promote in the Maori an inferiority complex with resultant mental apathy. It was the appearance of this state of mental apathy that led certain observers to predict the ultimate elimination of the splendid Maori race. The seeds of decay had been widely sown and the tares were rapidly choking out the wheat.

It was at this critical moment in his history that the Maori was roused to save himself. A renaissance was experienced that promoted a regeneration from within. The propelling force behind that renaissance was the Young Maori Party.

The genesis of the Party was the Te Aute College Students' Association, formed in 1891 from a group of some twenty students who organised "The Association for the Amelioration of the Conditions of the Maori Race." (6) This Association was to include chiefs, Maori clergy, Maori members of parliament, Maori boys and European sympathisers. The Association aimed to combat the evil effects of the drink traffic amongst the Maoris, to spread a wider knowledge of hygiene, and to promote a general raising of the social life of the race. The aims were worthy and the seed was good. An idea was planted and its growth flourished, so that by January, 1897, it was a considerable Conference that met at Te Aute College. Many past students together with Maori and pakeha sympathisers were there assembled. By its constitution the organisation was styled the "Te Aute College Students' Association", and its objects were "To aid in the amelioration of the condition of the Maori race, physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually." (7)

This active group undertook to arouse the Maori people to a revived sense of self-esteem, and to uphold the title bestowed upon them by the Rev. Samuel Marsden, who described them as "A persevering people whom no privations or hardships can prevent from pursuing any object their minds are set upon." (8) The group comprised young intellectuals who were fired with enthusiasm to grapple effectively with the problems confronting them. Leaders emerged and the movement spread throughout the Maori society, developing interest, winning support, demanding a hearing. Many of the leaders were of mixed blood. The Maori people were told the parable of the sticks, a story which carried great weight. Whereas one stick will tend to fall, many sticks bound together will be strong and be able to stand: for unity is strength. They were told, also, the parable of the nets: KA PU TE RUHA KA HAO TE RANGATAHI, i.e. the old net is placed aside and the new net goes a-fishing. Old customs and traditions that had become ineffective must give place to new, for the Maori world was changing.

These Maoris of mixed blood were more readily able to establish bonds of fellowship with the pakeha, being able, by reason of their birth and upbringing, to view both sides of most problems rationally.

Apirana Turupa Ngata (later Sir Apirana Ngata) New Zealand's first Maori University graduate, was the leader in the sphere of politics. Te Rangi Hiroa (now Sir Peter Buck) a world figure in ethnology, led in the domain of health, whilst the Rev. F.A. Bennett devoted himself to the spiritual needs of his people.

At the Conference the latter delivered an eloquent address on the subject "How to be Christian despite surroundings." He strongly appealed to the younger Maoris to bear their full part in the regeneration of their race, pointing out that young men held the key to every situation. He said "The cry is for young men to take a leading part in managing Maori affairs" and educating Maori thought." (9) He urged concerted, well directed efforts against the evils then pervading Maori life, striving always by diligent Christian example to promote a higher way of life. He himself determined to set the seal upon his plea and so lead the way by devoting himself to mission work. His life was not to ^{be} one of quiet ease within a restricted parish, equipped with the comforts of modern civilisation. It was to be something much greater, much more adventurous, much more demanding, both physically and mentally.

So, after attending the Conference at Te Aute College, the Rev. Bennett commenced a tour of the North Island on bicycle. He was increasingly disturbed by the growth of Mormonism amongst the Maoris, especially by the followers of Te Whiti. The Te Whiti movement mainly affected the Taranaki people, who paid little regard to Sundays. To them Sunday occurred on the 17th. of each month, for on that day Te Whiti's followers flocked to Parihaka to hear their leader's words. The memory of the ignorance of these Te Whiti people remained keenly in his mind when the Rev. Bennett returned to Nelson.

HIS ENGAGEMENT. It was while serving as Curate at All Saints' that he became engaged to Miss Hannah Te Unihi Mere Parke, daughter of the leading Chief of the Motueka district. Hannah Parke had been sent from Motueka to Hawke's Bay, to be educated at Hukarere Maori Girls' College, Napier. This was the sister school of Te Aute. Hukarere girls had often been urged by speakers from the Young Maori Party to carry the good influence of their school training back with them to the Maori pas. Their education and experience of English manners and home life qualified them to set new standards of life for their people.

MARRIAGE. Miss Parke and the Rev. F.A. Bennett were married at Motueka on May 11th., 1899. They were able to go out together into the mission field and there reveal by example their aspirations for a nobler way of life for their people.

The Rev. Bennett retained indelible memories of the distressing conditions prevailing amongst the Maori people of Taranaki. He felt the call to go over and help them, and his decision was made. After four happy years amongst the Maoris and pakehas of the Nelson district, he determined to move to Bell Block, Taranaki, in 1899. Only one imbued with the courage and ideals of this man could make decisions so fraught with personal sacrifice and, indeed, personal peril.

REFERENCES:

- (1) Personal interview with Mr. M. Takarangi at Putiki, Dec. 3rd., 1947.
- (2) Extract from "The Church Recorder", Nelson, October issue, 1897.
- (3) Extract from "The Marlborough Press", issue of Oct. 26th., 1897, reporting an address by the Rev. F.A. Bennett on "Missions to Maoris."
- (4) Extract from "The Colonist", Nelson, issue of Oct. 16th., 1897.
- (5) Dr. I.L.G. Sutherland, "The Maori Situation", p. 40.
- (6) Intro. to "Reports and Addresses of Te Aute College Students' Association", p.4.
- (7) Extract from the Constitution of Te Aute College Students' Association, as contained in "Reports and Addresses", p. 4.
- (8) Words spoken by the Rev. Samuel Marsden and quoted by Dr. I.L.G. Sutherland in his book "The Maori Situation", p. 106.
- (9) Extract from "The Colonist", Nelson, reporting speech by the Rev. F.A. Bennett, issue of March 6th., 1897.

A NEW MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE.
TURNING DARKNESS INTO LIGHT
AT BELL BLOCK, TARANAKI.

The Maoris of Taranaki were in sorry plight spiritually when the Rev. Bennett undertook the tremendous task of turning their heathen darkness into light at the end of 1899. As an aftermath of the Maori Wars, there was in Taranaki widespread distrust and hatred of the pakehas. Moreover, considerable areas of land had been confiscated from them by the Government, following the war in that province. Ignorance and prejudice prevailed amongst the Maoris who had largely come under the influence of two false leaders, Te Whiti and Tohu.

THE PARIHAKA OR TE WHITI MOVEMENT was at its height in 1900, when Te Whiti and Tohu sought to play the roles of prophets by leading their people in an anti-pakeha campaign. Originally these two men had worked in cooperation, but latterly they had quarrelled. Each claimed to be the true prophet, with the result that the people took sides. Te Whiti had the larger following, called "maires", whilst Tohu led the "pores", who wore no feathers. (1)

Both men had strong personalities and possessed considerable knowledge of Maori history and tradition. Referring to Te Whiti, Peter Buck, when addressing the first Conference of The Young Maori Party, said:

" The Taranaki Maoris love and idolise him, and his influence
" for good or evil is almost boundless. It is hard to believe,
" after hearing his own words, that Te Whiti has not the welfare of
" the Maori people at heart, And yet, what good can be traced to
" the Te Whiti movement? I can think of none. " (2)

As mentioned, the Maoris of Taranaki took little notice of Sunday, which, to them occurred on the seventeenth day of each month. On that day, all who were able proceeded to Parihaka, described by Peter Buck as

" A large pa, full of dirt and all manner of filth!"

Such was the state of Parihaka when Peter Buck left it in 1890 to enter Te Aute College. But on his return there in 1897, this condition had largely changed for the better. The Maoris had dug drains, metalled roads and broken stones for this work. Timber houses had generally replaced the old raupo huts, and two large dining rooms had been erected for the service of the multitude that assembled on the appointed day each month. Amidst this apparent betterment, pakeha vices were evident, for there were two billiard rooms and two unlicensed public houses.

Te Whiti was a master of Maori oratory and knew well how to command the attention and interest of his people. Quoting freely from the Bible, he would expound certain portions at these gatherings. But drunkenness, gambling and immorality abounded unchecked. Said Peter Buck

" The Taranaki Maoris treat religion as an abstraction or a
" science to be studied, but whose teachings are by no means
" practised. As far as I know, there is not a single Maori
" church or Maori clergyman in the whole of the Taranaki
" province north of Parihaka. Most, if not all of the
" Taranaki Maoris do not see the inside of a church from one
" year's end to another. " (3)

Such was the condition of the territory which the Rev. F.A. Bennett entered in 1899, bearing the light of the Christian Gospel, as under Divine commission. On several occasions he visited Parihaka at the time of the monthly gatherings. He found that Te Whiti's followers likened themselves to the Children of Israel, in bondage to the greater white race, but one day to vanquish the oppressors. Religious passages were recited to the accompaniment of poi dances. Many of their hakas were deliberately used to insult the whites, both by words and obscene gestures. These demonstrations in Parihaka were subject to no police interference, presumably because it was feared that interference might precipitate bloodshed. The rule of law was absent from Parihaka. The conditions confronting the Rev. Bennett were indeed forbidding, but he had courage and faith.

Archdeacon Samuel Williams of Te Aute was a staunch support to him, providing financial assistance enabling him to purchase a six-roomed house at Bell Block. This home was the centre of his mission work. He~~d~~ erected a large building nearby, in which he could hold his services. His mission work was not confined to the area of New Plymouth, but included the Maori settlements all around Mount Egmont. For this outlying pastoral duty he used a horse and gig. He was greatly encouraged by the keen interest displayed by the pakeha people of Taranaki in his Maori Mission enterprise, and a white committee was set up in New Plymouth to assist him in every possible way in the performance of his great work. Although Bell Block was included in the Auckland Diocese, the Rev. Bennett's stipend was paid throughout his service there by Archdeacon Samuel Williams of Te Aute.

The pakeha committee at New Plymouth strongly supported him in bringing under the notice of the Government the backward state of education amongst the Maoris of the Taranaki district. The Hon. James Carroll, then Native Minister, was approached and interested, so that a representative of the Education Department

was sent in 1901 to select a suitable site for the school; but it was not until the 22nd. of April, 1903, that the school was opened. It was on that occasion/^{that the Rev. Bennett} strongly urged the Maori people to improve their conditions by promoting reform within themselves. Education would lead them out of mental darkness. He emphasised that their race was not doomed to extinction, but would ultimately tend to merge with the white race. Said he

" Cold iron cannot be welded to a piece which is heated white.
" Both must be heated together before fusion can take place:
" The fire which will weld the two races together is education,
" and in the future a race will evolve which is not entirely
" Maori nor entirely pakeha. The New Zealander of the future
" will be he in whose veins flows commingled the blood of
" pakeha and Maori." (4)

Speaking later on the same day, Peter Buck rejoiced in the erection of the first Native school in Taranaki. He praised the work of Mr. Bennett and declared that, upon his completion of his medical degree at Otago University, he hoped to join the Rev. Bennett in this field of Maori work.

This was the second Maori school that the Rev. F.A. Bennett had been instrumental in establishing for the advancement of his people. The first was at Putiki, where he aroused the Maori people to achieve their own advancement by reforming themselves. Now, in Taranaki, where the Maoris were hardened and embittered, he had lit another torch to show them the way out of darkness into light.

To the Maori, mana is greatly enhanced by example. By going alone to the inhospitable field of Bell Block, the Rev. Bennett had shown considerable courage. He stood for the pakeha religion in territory where the pakeha was scorned and hated. Only as a Maori was he accepted, and he succeeded because he was indefatigable in his work for the good of his race.

In 1901 he toured New Zealand in his effort to raise funds for the erection of a Maori Girls' College in Auckland. The tour was successful and the school was opened later.

At his home he cultivated a ten acre plot of land to assist in supporting his wife and family of three children, Wiri, Samuel and James, all born at Bell Block. He enjoyed a happy domestic life and was nobly supported in his pastoral and welfare work by the cooperation of his wife. Writing to her whilst she was on a visit to her people in Moturka, he said:

" I do not suppose there is another Maori kainga where
" people are so happy, simply because we have been brought
" up well, and have had every advantage of living as Christians
" should live. It is natural that our home should be an
" example to all who see it." (5)

He launched an attack against the liquor traffic which was working havoc amongst the Maoris of his district. Liquor was sold to the Maoris for consumption off licensed premises, barrels of liquor being openly consumed even on the native maraes. In 1903 he offered himself as a candidate for election to a committee for the better control of the liquor traffic. Together with four other candidates in favour of 10 o'clock instead of 11 o'clock closing p.m., he was able to bring the claims of the Maori people before the electorate. Subsequent to the election of this committee of which he was a member, the Rev. Bennett appealed to the Native Minister, the Hon. James Carroll, to introduce legislation to make it unlawful for liquor to be sold to Maoris for consumption off licensed premises. The appeal was successful and, in 1904, the Licensing Act Amendment Act provided that

" In districts defined, any person who supplies liquor to a
" Maori for consumption off the premises is liable to a fine
" of £50. "

The Rev. Bennett regarded the liquor traffic as one of the chief causes retarding the development of the Maori people. He had encountered its abuses everywhere he had travelled amongst his people. With this first step towards reform placed upon the Statute Book, he immediately proceeded to seek further improvements. Speaking at Gisborne in 1907, he forcibly stated his views at a public meeting called to consider reform of the Local Option Law, and said:

" We have now reached years of discretion and we see that we
" have a grievance. Why should our people be subjected to
" the drink traffic? Literally, ~~we~~ have hotels forced upon
" them and yet to have no voice whatever regarding the issue
" of licenses in their midst. We feel old enough now to be
" trusted with the Local Option vote, as it affects us." (6)

TO ROTORUA.

After five years of devoted service at Bell Block, the Rev. F.A. Bennett felt the call to return to his own people, so he proceeded to Rotorua in February, 1905. Like the little village of Te Wairoa, Rotorua was the centre of the tourist traffic, and suffered in certain ways as a consequence. The Maoris there required spiritual guidance in the face of new and unsettling experiences. Also, his status and task at Taranaki had been rendered more difficult in 1904, when his views conflicted with those of the Archdeacon of the Auckland Dioceses. Possibly his enthusiasm for his work led him to be somewhat impetuous; but, having been appointed supervising Missionary in the Taranaki Mission field, he could not well suffer his good work to be hindered by an outside authority, probably unsympathetic.

He had faithfully worked the fallow ground of Taranaki and the results amongst the Maori people were most encouraging. But he preferred to organise the work in his own way. A compromise arrangement being out of the question, he felt compelled to resign his position in Taranaki just when the real fruits of his labour were becoming fully evident. The high esteem in which he was held at New Plymouth was clearly shown by the protest against his transfer, conveyed to the Bishop of Auckland from a public meeting held in January, 1905, which declared:

" We, the undersigned, pray that Mr. Bennett be not removed from
" our midst. We have seen that he is a good man, who appears
" to understand us thoroughly, knows our weaknesses and works
" earnestly for our benefit and salvation. We have been living
" in darkness, but through his efforts we have been brought into
" light and to realise something of the privileges and blessings
" which you as a pakeha people possess, and, above all, to under-
" stand something of the principles of the Gospel of our Lord
" Jesus Christ." (7)

The protest tells much, when it is remembered that it came from people who, five years previously, were anti-Christian, highly prejudiced and misguided.

A public meeting of the pakeha population of New Plymouth, convened by the Mayor, voiced a similar protest. Despite his campaign against the liquor traffic, a leading brewer of New Plymouth offered financial support to Mr. Bennett if he would remain there to continue his good work amongst the Maori people. His welfare work greatly impressed many throughout the province, even those normally apathetic to religious matters.

In his work at Bell Block, the Rev. F.A. Bennett's beliefs and ideals were truly tested, and the results achieved will always stand as a monument worthy of his memory.

REFERENCES:

- (1) "The Taranaki Maoris", an address by Peter Buck to the Te Aute College Students' Association, 1897, p. 10.
- (2) Ibid. p. 12.
- (3) Ibid. p. 11.
- (4) Report in the "Taranaki Herald" of Friday, April 24th., 1903.
- (5) Letter written to Mrs. Bennett from Bell Block, dated 9th. January, 1905.
- (6) Report in the "Gisborne Times" of October 11th., 1907.
- (7) From collection of letters of Bishop Bennett.

PASTORAL WORK AT ROTORUA, TAUPŌ AND TOKAANU.

Removing to Rotorua in February, 1905, the Rev. F.A. Bennett was immediately faced with a housing problem. For a while he had to rent a home in the town of Rotorua to accommodate his wife and her small family. Again Archdeacon Samuel Williams came to his assistance. The house at Bell Block was sold and the proceeds used for the erection of a new house for the Bennett family on a site just below Pukeroa Hill, on Whakarewa Street. It was well situated, being near to Ohinemutu, an added attraction being that the section contained an excellent hot spring.

The Rev. Bennett felt keenly the urgent needs of the people of his tribe. Commercialisation, as a result of the tourist traffic, had led to deterioration and general moral decline. A mental and moral renaissance was required, and to this task he turned all his energies. The circumstances were different from those previously encountered, for the radius of his work in Rotorua district, though less than that at Bell Block, was more thickly populated.

He first sought to win the confidence of the people. Some were distressed at his return, because they would now be faced with his challenging message. His predecessor in the work had not enjoyed the trust of the Arawa people, and declension had set in. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church was firmly established at Whakarewarewa, and the Ringatu sect had a fairly large following also.

THE RINGATU SECT derived from Te Kooti, who sought to found a spiritual body that was typically Maori in its beliefs and practices. According to James Cowan, the name means "the upstretched hand." "This refers to the feat of the ancient Hebrew Tohunga, whose hands were held up by his people until the battle turned for his warriors." (1) The chants and prayers are largely taken from the Psalms, and in many respects the service is similar to that of the Church of England in regard to chants and responses. "The priest places the tips of his fingers together as he recites the prayers, and the people in responding hold up the right hand on a level with the face. Saturday is the holy day of the Ringatu, and there is a kind of special festival once a month." (2)

This faith, which is rather poetical and inspiring, tended to give the Maori a spiritual link with his ancestral home. But its continued adherence to beliefs in witchcraft (makutu) tended to despoil its beneficent features.

Thus two sectarian bodies presented opposing fronts to the Rev. Bennett who commenced his chief activities at Ohinemutu and Whakarewarewa. There were already churches at both places, but at Ohinemutu there was no hall, whilst the church at Whakarewarewa was owned by a chief who had accepted Roman Catholicism. At first this chief permitted the Rev. Bennett to use the church for his services; but later, when he saw the enthusiasm won by the energetic young preacher, he set his face against him. The Priest from Tokaanu was openly hostile. So one Sunday morning the Rev. Bennett arrived to find all the equipment for his service removed from the church and the door barred. A billiard saloon was therefore hired, pending the raising of funds with which to build his own church at Whakarewarewa and a mission hall at Ohinemutu. He organised a choir and special concert party to promote the raising of funds for these two projects. The objectionable type of Maori entertainment was replaced by something entirely new and inspiring. Some of the die-hards expressed grave doubts whether the pakehas would attend these shows; but "Hinemoa" proved such a popular success that it was decided to take the party on tour. All members gave their services free, and the resultant proceeds from these various efforts were sufficient to build the church at Whakarewarewa and the hall at Ohinemutu. Later, a church was built at Te Ngae, on the site of the old mission station, erected in the Rev. Chaplin's time; another at Mourea, a village on the channel linking Lakes Rororua and Roto-iti; and another at Te Awahou, on the opposite side of the lake from Rotorua.

Then he turned his attention to the southern area of his district. The Maori population around Taupo was comparatively small, but Christianity had been firmly established amongst the Maori descendants of Tama-te-Kapua's kidnapped priest by the Rev. Grace, who worked amongst them from 1850 to 1879. The Rev. Bennett revived the Christian enthusiasm of the Taupo Maoris, and churches were built at Oruanui, Taupo and Tokaanu, the latter in 1908.

The bell hung in the Tokaanu church has a history, for when Te Kooti, the rebel, was raiding western Taupo, he suffered lack of ammunition. So he seized the bell at Pukawa Mission and sought to melt it down. The bell was broken, but the task of melting proved too great, and the bell was lost. The Rev. Bennett sought to find it, and at last succeeded in locating it in the grounds of the Tokaanu hotel, buried in a heap of debris. He claimed the bell from the hotel proprietor, who accepted his claim; and the bell was finally restored to the church.

In the country of the Tuhoe tribe, the Rev. Bennett made contact with the late Reverend Pene Hakiwai, chaplain to the Maori Battalion in the first World War. The latter was at Ruatuki, and together they organised the building of a church at Ruatuki and another at Te Matai, near Te Puke. The Rev. Pene Hakiwai proved a staunch co-worker and they rejoiced greatly in their labours. But the work required new recruits and the Rev. Bennett determined to find them. Maori workers in the mission field were essential. The response to his call has been very good, for twenty-five Arawas have been ordained Priests of the Church of England, all from the Rotorua district. Sixteen of these were sent during Mr. Bennett's term in Rotorua to be trained as theological students. This, surely, is a great tribute to his work there.

THE LAKES CASE. One of these theological students, Manehera Tumatahi, was responsible for the part played by the Arawa tribe in what is now known as the Lakes Case. According to James Cowan--

" In the Rotorua-Rotoiti district, the fish of the lakes
" were a more important source of food supply than even
" the food of the land. So say the old men of the Arawa.
" The inanga (whitebait), toitoi and koura (crayfish) also
" the kakahi (shell fish) were taken in very great quantities,
" and, consequently, the fisheries were jealously guarded.
" The various parts of Rotorua, Rotoiti and other lakes had
" their names, and the boundaries of the various hapu were
" carefully defined by leading marks. Every yard of each of
" these lakes had its owners. In the principal lakes there
" were hundreds of tau-koura, or lines of stakes to which
" koura nets were fastened, and every important tumu or post
" had its name. The introduction of the pakeha's trout to
" the lakes resulted in the depletion of these supplies, and
" in conflict with the Maori over fishing laws. The
" Native Land Court and the Supreme Court were appealed to to
" decide the long-standing question of Maori rights under the
" Treaty of Waitangi. The outcome was the vindication of the
" Maori cause. " (3)

Manehera Tumatahi, on returning from the theological college in Gisborne to his home at Mourea, near Rotorua, rose early one morning to fish from the small pier on the lakeside frontage of his parents' property. It was while he was so engaged that a ranger of the Acclimatisation Society came by launch through the channel and pulled in at the jetty. He asked Manehera to produce his fishing license, but Manehera explained that he had only arrived from Gisborne the previous day and was simply catching fish for his morning meal, prior to going to Rotorua to purchase a fishing license. But Manehera was duly served with a summons to appear in Court, where he was fined £5.

The Rev. F.A. Bennett was greatly moved with a sense of the obvious injustice of this penalty, for Manehera was a most promising student whom he had sought to encourage in his training for the ministry. This young student was merely fishing from his own lake frontage for fish liberated in the lakes without the consent of the owners of the lakes. Manehera's explanation was true and his action was not such as warranted a severe penalty. As the result of the publicity given to the case, many leaders of the Arawa tribe consulted with the Rev. Bennett, and it was decided to take the matter to the Native Land Court. The case hinged on the ownership of the land under the water of the lake, and the Court decided that ownership thereof remained with the Maori people. The Acclimatisation Society then referred the case to the Supreme Court and later to the Appeal Court; but on both hearings, the decision went against the Society. The decision was that land under fresh water such as the Rotorua lakes did not become King's property. Although the Society was prepared to take the case to the Privy Council, a compromise was reached when the Minister of Justice and the Native Minister visited Rotorua and agreed with the Maori leaders that the Government should henceforth pay to the Maori owners the sum of £6000 per annum in perpetuity.

The Arawa leaders decided that this money should be set aside under the control of the Arawa Trust Board, appointed in 1924 to supervise the uses to which these annual monetary grants should be put. The Board's aims are stated to be

- "A constant and active interest in the study and furtherance
- " of important projects for the benefit of the Arawa tribe as
- " a whole, besides helping sub-tribes and individual members
- " thereof in many directions. "

(4)

The projects included aids to education, particularly financial help to boys and girls wishing to further their studies. The Board kept itself informed of the progress of such beneficiaries by keeping in touch with the Registrars of the University Colleges or with the Principals of schools. The Board also organised village committees to supervise the establishment and maintenance of better rules of hygiene and public health within the Maori village communities. This step marked a great advance in the direction of order, cleanliness and general moral improvement. From its inception, Mr. Tai Mitchell, C.M.G., was a most active promoter of this good work, until his death in 1926.

The benefits derived by the Maori people from the operations of the Arawa Trust Board have become more and more obvious with the passing of the years. Says Dr. J.B. Condliffe:

" What this means, not only in material advancement,
" but in such matters as hygiene, may be judged from
" the fact that one of the first acts of the Board
" was the re-purchase of Maketu, the ancestral landing
" place of the tribe." (5)

Moreover, the Board, still wisely active, willingly acknowledges, as indeed do all the ~~Kiawa~~ people, the continuing debt of gratitude to the Rev. F.A. Bennett for his determined stand on behalf of Maori fishing rights, and for his bold condemnation of the obvious injustice in the case of Manhera Tumatahi.

The Taupo Maoris then took similar action, with the result that they were awarded £3000 per annum by way of compensation, plus a percentage of the money derived from the sale of fishing licenses.

LAND CONSOLIDATION.

After 1905, consolidation of the scattered Maori land-holdings into economic farm units spelled material progress too. It meant a regeneration of Maori agriculture, something solid and truly worth while, better far than living on the hand-outs of a transitory tourist traffic. To quote Dr. J.B. Condliffe: " The effective utilisation of the land so consolidated
" and incorporated represents a still further and very
" successful stage in the economic and social rehabilitation
" of the Maoris: " (6)

The watch cry of the sentry on guard above the sleeping pa has now assumed new meaning: " Behold it is dawn, it is dawn, it is day! " (7)

The Rev. Bennett encouraged the introduction of hygienic methods within the pas, promoted educational schemes for the training of Maori youth for the professions, commended up-to-date methods of farming and the return of the Maori to the land. He also served on the Rotorua Municipal Council. Mr. Tai Mitchell was an able and staunch helper, for he held similar ideals. They worked together for Maori betterment, for the renaissance and regeneration of the Maori people, and the results of their united efforts have not been in vain.

In 1906, Tiwha was born to the Rev. and Mrs. Bennett, and, in 1908, Hannah. But a sorry blow fell soon after Hannah's birth, for Mrs. Bennett passed away. She had been her husband's unfailing companion, helper and inspirer in all his undertakings, making possible his successful leadership

as missionary and minister. In the little church at Ohinemutu, named St. Faith's, rebuilt in 1917, fitting tribute is paid the memory of Mrs. Bennett in the lovely stained glass window behind the altar.

His work, nevertheless, continued unabated whilst he reared a young and motherless family. He served his missions in Rotorua, Taupo and Tokaanu well, organising choirs and promoting entertainments and youth activities. "Courage was the thing."

On December 12th., 1911, he married again. His bride was Alice Rangiaue Pokiha, daughter of Hemana Pokiha, a leading Chief of the Ngati-Pikiou tribe. She was a young, energetic woman, imbued with her husband's ideals. She bore him eleven sons and two daughters, and was his constant helper in all his work, advising, encouraging and tending him during those difficult years. Her good influence was felt throughout the whole field of his many and varied activities, for she was a splendid partner to him.

JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITIES.

Since 1898, the Rev. F.A. Bennett devoted much of his spare time to the publication of pamphlets and magazines for the guidance and encouragement of the Maori people. In Nelson he had published "Te Kupu Whakamarama" (the word of enlightenment or explanation) intended for the general uplift of the readers in all aspects of life. Especially was it intended for their education in moral and spiritual matters. In it appeared reports of Maori gatherings throughout New Zealand, the activities of the Young Maori Party and the various conferences. On his transfer to Bell Block, this magazine continued to be published in Gisborne under the title of "Te Pipiwharau" (The Shining Cuckoo) and, later, when the theological students at Gisborne took over its publication, it was called "Te Kopara" (The Bell Bird). The students chose this name from the old Maori proverb:

"Iti te kopara kai taki rikiri ana i runga i te kahikatea,"
which means: "Even though only a very small bird, it climbs higher and higher,
till it reached the top branches."

The students continued this work until the Rev. Bennett transferred to Hawke's Bay in 1917. He then saw the advisability of once more becoming its editor. He then changed its name to "Te Toa Takitini", a title taken from another Maori proverb which stated that a man who was once asked to fight a duel replied that his heroism was not of himself but of the whole company. As the title suggested, the success of the magazine depended not alone upon the editor but upon all readers cooperating for the common good.

This publication was of great value, for it provided a link to unite the Maori people, and a channel through which ideas and opinions could flow to be shared and exchanged. It kept the various groups in closer contact with each other. In referring to this magazine, James Cowan once stated:

"This is the finest paper I have ever seen " (8)

At the students' conference, the Rev. Bennett had realised the need for some common bond of union by which the Maori people could share their experiences and derive inspiration and guidance in spiritual matters. Te Paa Ripia, a Chief of Tokomaru Bay, said of the magazine:

" Your paper is sweet to my taste, and may its voice be
" heard for many years to come. " (9)

But "Te Toa Takitini" had to cease publication during the years of paper shortage.

The thirteen years spent at Rotorua were crammed with strenuous labour for the Rev. F.A. Bennett. In spite of some disappointments, they were mostly years of happiness in the knowledge of a task well done. For once again the Maori people became proud of their church and regained new confidence in themselves. His zest for his work was like new leaven. His earlier association with Rotorua gave him a lively affection for it. He fought fearlessly to restore it from the alien vices that were wreaking such havoc for his people. His boldness and courage restored many and inspired all to new and lasting hope. By simple conversation and by his own high example in presenting the Gospel truth, he won many converts to Christianity.

THE FIRST GREAT WAR.

From August, 1914, many young Maori warriors left the Rotorua district to serve their King and country overseas, on Gallipoli and in France and Flanders. It was their grand opportunity to demonstrate their valour and inherent fighting qualities. More than 2200 Maoris, together with many hundreds of Polynesian Islanders, enlisted for service at the Empire's call. On Gallipoli they suffered heavy casualties, many officers and men being decorated for acts of gallantry. Their casualties, amounting to 45% of their numbers during 1915 to 1918, speak for themselves. The Maori Pioneer Battalion in France won special commendation for endurance and steadiness under sustained shell fire. Altogether, their gallant conduct in the field served enormously to stiffen the fibre of the whole Maori race, and it won the respect and affection of their pakeha brothers as nothing but common sacrifice and suffering could.

" The social and spiritual rehabilitation of the Maori was crowned
" by this long service under arms on the thundering fields of
" France and Flanders." (10)

Although most desirous of serving overseas with the Maori troops on active service, the Rev. F.A. Bennett was deterred by his other obligations. He was eager to go with them as Padre to care for their spiritual welfare, but he had first to care for nine young children. Then came the call to pioneer work among the tribes of Hawke's Bay, and he knew that an even greater task awaited him in this eastern province of his own country.

REFERENCES:

- (1) James Cowan: " The Maori Yesterday and Today", p. 66.
(Also Exodus 17: 11-12.)
- (2) Ibid. p. 66.
- (3) Ibid. p. 182.
- (4) Second Annual Report of Arawa Trust Board, 1925, printed at
Rotorua Chronicle Office, 1927.
- (5) Dr. J.B. Condliffe: "New Zealand in the Making", p. 70.
- (6) Ibid. p. 81.
- (7) Ibid. p. 89.
- (8) " Te Pipiwharauora", No. 42, p.11.
- (9) Ibid.
- (10) James Cowan: "The Maori Yesterday and Today", pp. 11-12.

THE CALL TO HAWKE'S BAY.

The Church of England authorities in the Waiapu Diocese decided to call the Rev. F.A. Bennett, after his thirteen years in the Rotorua district, to the service of the Hawke's Bay Maoris. The Ngati-Kahungunu tribe is paramount in this area; but like most other Maori tribes this one too had fallen on difficult days. Though the worst evils had largely been avoided in Hawke's Bay, the need for an effective Maori Mission was great. A big portion of the native land had been sold and the proceeds dissipated; but the task of regenerating a confident and happy people to prosperity was somewhat easier. Better education for the duties of life, minds renewed with encouragement and hope, and better utilisation of the land still held in Maori ownership, were seen to be the means toward attaining a better economic status.

Again the Rev. Bennett was confronted with a housing problem. There was a house available at Te Hauke, some thirteen miles south of Hastings, but it was too far removed from the educational needs of a young family. A chieftainess, living at Kohupatiki with her adopted daughter only, offered her house of six rooms to meet his needs as missionary. It was ideally situated, being about half way between Napier and Hastings. Under her Will, she made the title to the property his, as from the date of her death; and he has done likewise in the interests of the Church, to ensure a continuing home for future appointments to the Bishopric of Aotearoa.

The Rev. F.A. Bennett became pastor of the Waipatu church, but his mission work extended from Waipawa in the south to Nuhaka in the north. Most of the Maori people in this wide district claimed to be Mihi Ngare, adherents of the Church of England. The term derives from the work previously carried on by the Church Missionary Society. Land endowments had been

provided for both Te Aute College and for Hukarere Maori Girls' College, but few Hawke's Bay Maori children, Mr. Bennett discovered, were attending either school. There may have been some degree of prejudice, as many of the old Chiefs were still alive in 1917, and, as they still held considerable areas of land which commanded a ready sale, they had little stimulus to seek for themselves or for their children the benefits of education in order to improve their position in life. They could sell part of their land at any time and live upon the proceeds. So they wasted their valuable capital assets.

Under the able leadership of Sir Apirana Ngata, the members of the Ngati-Porou tribe were conducting a most successful experiment in agricultural reorganisation, and other tribes have since followed their good example.

" The Ngati-Kahungunu of Wairoa, after a generation of
" aloofness from the example of the Ngati-Porou, satisfied
" themselves that the secret must be laboriously learned.
" Their fellow tribesmen of Hawke's Bay made it the chief
" subject of debate at a meeting at Omaha early in May, 1929." (1)

The Rev. F.A. Bennett immediately sought to counter this widespread neglect of educational facilities and general dis-interest in matters of reform. Comparatively few Maori youths attended Te Aute College and still fewer the University Colleges. Those who did so mostly came from the East Coast. So one of the Rev. Bennett's first tasks was to stir up a new enthusiasm amongst the Maori people of Hawke's Bay for the cause of education. He determined to quicken them into newness of mental life. He was elected a member of the Standing Committee for the Diocese of Waiapu. He served also on the Board of Governors of Te Aute College, and on the Board of Diocesan Trustees. By reason of his membership of these various bodies, he was able to stress the importance of the several Maori problems and claims for the careful consideration and favourable action of the Church authorities.

In matters of national patriotism, however, the Ngati-Kahungunu people were commendably alive. The tribe was splendidly represented in the First N.Z.E.F., and their response to all patriotic appeals for funds to provide comforts for the boys on active service was indeed admirable. The Rev. F.A. Bennett fostered this good spirit, urging the claims and needs of the boys at the Front, and, later, the tasks involved in their rehabilitation to civil life. His sincerity and quiet approach served greatly to encourage this patriotic fervour and resourcefulness to meet the needs of those days.

Through the generosity of the Ngati-Kahungunu people, and, in particular of the ~~chieftainess~~, Puke Puke Tangiora Mohi, of Paki Paki, a lovely little memorial church was erected at this place in 1924. This charming structure is built of limestone quarried at Paki Paki. It is the only building of the type in Hawke's Bay, dedicated to the service of the Maori people. It successfully withstood the earthquake of 1931, which proved so disastrous. The vicarage at Moteo and the brick church at Tangoio were both demolished. The Rev. Bennett was a prime mover in the building of the Paki Paki memorial church.

THE RATANA MOVEMENT. In 1918, Wiremu Ratana, the Rangitikei evangelistic preacher, founded a sect in the Wanganui district which spread amongst the Maori people throughout New Zealand, promoted largely by his demonstrations of so-called faith healing. Ratana was a man of some rank and of considerable prestige on the West Coast. He began as a faith healer simply, and, at first, was desirous of collaborating with the other Christian Churches. He had become conscious of his power when one of his own children, through his intercession, ~~recovered~~ recovered from a severe illness. At the commencement of his evangelistic effort he was humble, sincere and cooperative with other religious organisations, inviting their members to visit his settlement at Ratana and to take part in the services. Says James Cowan:

" There is a fine catholicity of religious taste in the
" Maori. He is no zealot or bigot denying to others the
" religions that please them. At a great camp meeting at
" Wiremu Ratana's township, Ratana, in the Rangitikei district,
" services were held not only by disciples of the Ratana church,
" but by the native Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Methodists,
" Mormons and Ringatu. After each sect had had its service
" in its tent or the local church, all the denominations
" gathered around the flagstaff with its large banner of the
" Rongo-Pai (Glad Tidings) and at the mast foot each sect in
" turn was addressed by its minister. Each church respected
" the views of the others. There was no monopoly in modes of worship."
(2)

Some of Ratana's cures at the outset of his public ~~career~~ were rather remarkable. Perhaps the outstanding case was that of a Nelson woman who was suffering from rheumatoid arthritis. She had never seen Ratana, nor had he seen her. But she wrote to him, receiving one of his stereotyped replies. One night she felt that her cure had been achieved, rose from bed and abandoned the iron frame which she had been compelled to wear. The iron frame was sent to Ratana and exhibited prominently in his village, where it made a big impression on the credulous Maori mind.

But estrangement came at last between Ratana and the Christian Churches, and his movement departed from conventional practices. He adopted the title of "mangi" or mouthpiece, and claimed for his clergy the status of angels. Christ's name was almost completely dropped, and his own substituted. By reason of herd psychology, the Ratana movement made a strong appeal, its adherents being zealots of their faith. Some denominations lost members of their clergy to the movement, but no active members of the Anglican Church joined it.

The Rev. F.A. Bennett determined to hold the Mihi Ngare of Hawke's Bay staunch in their profession of the true Christian faith. Although some did turn for a time to the Ratana movement, they later returned to the Church of England. On their return, the Rev. F.A. Bennett did not denounce or condemn, but welcomed them to a renewal of their faith.

Although the Ratana movement has survived for a fair length of time, it has since become mainly a political movement, and has failed to supply the spiritual needs of many of its adherents. Because of its lack of hygienic facilities, Ratana township has become a by-word for conditions inimical to the public health.

Between the years 1917 and 1927, Mr. Bennett's pastoral duties were difficult and exacting. The field of service was very large and the people numerous. He had to overcome prejudice and fight evil. From the very outset of his work in this district, he had to take a bold stand against a mass movement that for a time tended to undermine the religious faith of the Ngati-Kahungunu people. He stood firm for truth against falsehood and error. He shirked no task for the betterment of his people, and failed in no duty to preserve that which is true, honest, just and of good report. His life thereby was mellowed and his character enriched, so that his mana with his people has become a shining light to show them the way to regeneration of body, mind and spirit.

(1) Dr. J.B. Condliffe: N.Z. in the Making, pp. 82-3,
(2) James Cowan: The Maori Yesterday and Today, pp. 64, 66.

APPOINTMENT AS SUFFRAGAN
TO THE BISHOP OF WAIAPU.

The Rev. F.A. Bennett's ^(widespread) ~~widespread~~ success in the field of Maori missions awakened a new interest within the Church of England. His good work became a leading subject for discussion at the General Synod held in 1925, when it was suggested that a Maori Diocese should be established with a Bishop set over it, in accordance with Anglican Church custom throughout the rest of New Zealand. Autonomy within native churches, developing in accordance with native traditions and outlook, was now becoming accepted in various parts of the world as a wise principle to promote growth and to develop the natural strength and spiritual robustness of such youthful Christian bodies. The matter was again discussed at the General Synod in 1926, but it was not until the following year that the subject assumed front-rank importance and gained general public recognition.

At the latter Synod the discussion hinged mainly upon the new office of Bishop, whether the appointee should be a Maori or a pakeha. As early as 1877 the proposal had been urged that a Maori Bishop should be appointed, and a Church Conference was called to discuss the suggestion. Writing to the editorial secretary of the C.M.S. on July 19th., 1877, the Rev. T.S. Grace said:

" I promised to keep you informed as to the feeling out here
" with respect to our having a Native Bishop. You will have seen
" that the Conference has concluded that we have no suitable
" native clergyman to fill that office. On the native side it is
" different. As far as it has been brought before them, they have
" been unanimous in its favour. I will enclose the copy of a letter
" sent to the Press by a highly intelligent Native, in which you will
" see that he meets admirably the point raised by the Conference." (1)

The letter was as follows:

" To the Editor of the Waka Maori,
" Friend,
"
" Here are some words which kindly permit the friends in these
" islands to see through the medium of your columns. They are a few
" thoughts which have occurred to me in connection with matters in which
" we have been instructed.
" We were first instructed in Christianity, and as soon as knowledge was acquired, some were made ministers, and it is twenty years or more since they entered upon office.
" We were not instructed in the law, and had scarcely laid hold of all its points, when some of us were dragged forward to be Members of Parliament, Ministers of the Government, and Assessors in Courts of Justice. Now I would ask the question, why are some of us raised to prominent positions in the Government and not in the Church? In other words, why do the church appointments, with respect to us Maoris, abruptly cease at the office of ordinary minister? Why is there no

"Maori Bishop, since the Natives of these islands have, for a considerable time embraced Christianity?

" A report has reached us that the leaders of the Church of England in New Zealand are on the look-out for a Bishop of the Diocese of Waiapu, in the room of our patriarch, Bishop Williams, who has resigned, and that they are asking for him amongst the ranks of the English Clergy. Why, I ask is not a Maori Bishop appointed to that See? for there is a very great deal to be done by a Bishop of that Diocese in connection with the Maori portion of the Church.

" It is the right we are seeking for, the right according to Scripture, and according to the custom in other lands; and some way also whereby the union between European and Maori may be quite complete."

(Sgd) James Martin. (2)

The Conference at last concluded that there was no Native clergyman suitable for the post, but it did not repudiate the idea. The Maori people felt that, as a definite decision had been made to create a Diocese, a Maori appointee was the obviously suitable choice for the office of Bishop. In Africa, a member of the Negro race held office as Bishop, so why not a Maori in New Zealand?

On March 1st., 1927, a special meeting of delegates of the Aotearoa Diocese was held at Ohinemutu. The conference was informal, being called in order to have a round table discussion concerning the difficult situation that had arisen at the August Synod in Wellington in 1926. On that occasion, opinion was fairly equally divided as to whether the appointee should be Maori or pakeha. At Ohinemutu, therefore, after lengthy discussion, the Hon. A.T. Ngata moved, and the Rev. F.A. Bennett seconded the following resolution:

" This Conference, having before it the opinions expressed by
 " high dignitaries of the Church and of authorities in Church
 " law, reaffirms the resolution that was passed at a Conference in
 " Wellington, on August 6th., 1926. The opinion of the Conference,
 " while divided as to whether the appointment of a Maori or a pakeha
 " as the first Bishop of Aotearoa would be the wisest course, never-
 " theless recognises that, in the unanimous opinion of the Maori
 " people, a member of the race should be appointed to that high office." (3)

Certain members of Synod had based their objection to the appointment of a Maori Bishop in the belief that the Maori clergy hitherto had failed to use the great opportunities for self-expression entrusted to them in the exercise of their office, and that Synod should not be carried away by misplaced feelings of sentiment.

At that Synod, Dr. W.W. Sedgwick, Bishop of Waiapu, when he rose to speak, first apologised to the Rev. F.A. Bennett and expressed sorrow that the latter was the only representative of the Maori people present at the Synod to hear the debate then proceeding. Continuing, he said:

" We are told not to be moved by sentiment. Well, I am moved
" by sentiment. Sentiment has inspired all the greatest deeds
" in the history of the Empire. What is an Anzac Day celebration
" but the outcome of sentiment? Why should we debar a man from
" being ordained a Bishop of his own race? The Maori asked to
" be ordained by his own Bishop. That was sentiment." (4)

It was then that Sir Apirana Ngata made his eloquent plea to Synod, expressing the belief that the Maori needed a man who could go round to quicken a cold Church. He said:

" We admit the doubt in the mind of the pakeha as to whether we are
" equal to the occasion, but I ask if any pakeha could touch chords
" which a Maori Bishop could touch through that magic force called
" race. The need of the Church today is for a man who will go past
" the ten per cent of educated Maoris, and get right under the skins
" of the ninety per cent of the race who, despite one hundred years
" of civilisation, are almost as primitive as they were a hundred
" years ago." (5)

After many heated debates, the decision was finally reached to create a Maori Bishop, and the choice of the Church of England fell upon the Rev. F.A. Bennett, in just recognition of his long and faithful service to the Church. The General Synod's authorisation of his appointment was received with general satisfaction by the Maori people. They felt that they had attained a new and important status, which added to their self esteem. They felt, too, that the onus was on them to provide the Bishop's stipend of not less than £500 per annum, with a suitable residence and reasonable travelling allowances. This they set about to do. But the Bishop had no Diocese of his own. He was described as a "spiritual link binding together the Maori people." His work was to be dedicated to the Maoris in all the dioceses of New Zealand, including the Chatham Islands.

Writing to Sir Apirana Ngata soon after Bishop Bennett's appointment, Dr. Peter Buck, then at Bishop Museum, Honolulu, said:

" I note that Fred. Bennett has been appointed as our spiritual
" head, and wish him all success in a difficult position from a
" temporal point of view. Both sides can now unload their short-
" comings upon him. Judgment, diplomacy, firmness in big things
" of policy, with, perhaps, a courteous giving way in minor details,
" will be demanded of the position. The appointment is a historical
" event in the evolution of our culture, and no matter what the results,
" it is in keeping with the standard that has become naturally associated
" with the Maori division of the Polynesian people. It is a visible
" manifestation of the urge that has developed within, and demands
" expression in spite of all opposition. I see in you and others of
" the race who were associated with you, the spirit of your ancestors
" finding expression in the fields that remain open since the list of
" Tu has been closed down. Tibou of Tonga, Malietoa of Samoa, and

" Pomare of Tahiti fought their battles and secured so-called
" kingship. Thus activities were a continuation of their
" ordinary culture that culminated in social domination. Not
" all these victories are to be compared to that of securing
" a Maori Bishop, against the most obstinate of all armies,
" the Anglican Church. " (6)

CONSECRATION AS BISHOP.

On Sunday afternoon, December 2nd., 1928, a great assembly of the representatives of the Maori race met at the famous meeting-house at Paki Paki, about three miles south of Hastings, for on that morning, Frederick Augustus Bennett had been consecrated Bishop of Aotearoa, the first Maori Bishop in the history of New Zealand.

His Grace, the Archbishop of New Zealand, Dr. W.W. Averill, conducted the ceremony of consecration, which commenced with the Communion Service. The Venerable Archdeacon Herbert Williams preached the sermon, speaking first in Maori and translating in English. The Rev. Tamahori rendered the litany in Maori, with the Maori clergy chanting the responses. The laying-on of hands by the seven pakeha Bishops provided a scene of unforgettable import to the Maori mind, and the spiritual inspiration of the whole service was most impressive.

On the marae at Paki Paki, Sir Apirana Ngata welcomed the Primate and his "youngest child." He likened the Maori mission field to a potentially fertile field with insufficient tillers. Behind and in front the noxious weeds grew so rapidly as to become the despair of the solitary worker. Then, turning to the new Bishop, he said:

" But we will help you, and we know you will share with us
" the grime and sweat, common as well to the tiller of the soil
" as to all other vocations calling for intensive industry." (7)

Sir Apirana was followed by an old Arawa veteran, Mita Taupopoki, from Rotorua. Though he was a Roman Catholic, he too joined in the celebrations, for it was a day of rejoicing for the Maori people. He assured the Bishop of Aotearoa that he could rely upon the cooperation of Roman Catholics throughout the country, and concluded:

" This is a God sent day. Let us not be unmindful of its
" potentialities." (8)

Other speakers, representing the Ringatu, Mormon and Ratana adherents, all voiced the feeling that at last the Maori people had found safe anchorage spiritually, for that day one of their own had been elevated to a position of high honour, and the day of his consecration had true significance for them all.

Bishop Bennett's ~~first~~ service as Bishop of Aotearoa was conducted in the open air, remindful of Maori tribal custom. To the Maori people his appointment augured new meaning and purpose to the services of the Church. Confirmation would, henceforth, have a new significance for their children. They could be instructed and prepared in their own tongue, and confirmed by one of their own blood. Though the responsibilities and tasks devolving upon the new Bishop would be heavy, the possibilities were unmeasured and, so far, unexplored/

To the Church of England his appointment opened up a rapidly increasing potential membership, for the Maori rate of natural increase was now in excess of the white rate. The new Bishop was endowed with outstanding natural gifts, possessing abundant tact, patience, courtesy, eloquence and spiritual zeal. His fresh, unconventional style of preaching had won many converts to Christianity. He held the confidence and trust of his people. He knew very largely "what was in them." His language and native illustrations appealed to them. He applied lessons from everyday life in such fashion that they could well understand. He was indeed to become a link between Maori and pakeha, with a mana and prestige that have become nation-wide.

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1850-1879.
- (2) Ibid. p 258.
- (3) Supplement to Waiapu Church Gazette, printed at Napier, 1/4/27.
- (4) Dr. Sedgwick's speech, reported in "The Dominion" dated 16/8/1928.
- (5) Speech of Sir Apirana Ngata reported in "The Dominion" dated 23/4/1928.
- (6) Letter from Dr. Peter Buck, to Sir Apirana Ngata, reported in
"The Hawk's Bay Tribune" dated 11/16/1928.
- (7) Report in "The Evening Post" dated 15/12/1928.
- (8) Ibid.

THE DUAL OFFICE,
BISHOP OF AOTEAROA
and
SUFFRAGAN TO THE BISHOP OF WAIAPU.

THE DIOCESE OF WAIAPU.

On November 26th., 1857, Bishop Selwyn outlined his scheme to Mr. Labouchere regarding the establishment of four dioceses in the North Island—at Auckland, Tauranga, Turanga and Wellington. Under the scheme, Tauranga and Turanga were to be controlled by one Bishop, and landed property therefor was to be guaranteed by the Church Missionary Society.

Letters patent, constituting the new dioceses were duly issued, Tauranga and Turanga being combined as the Diocese of Waiapu. Waiapu differed from the other dioceses, in that there were few European settlers within its boundaries. It was not until 1861 that the Bishop of Waiapu was able to summon his first Synod to meet at Waerengaahika. At that time he had six European priests, one European deacon and four Maori deacons in his diocese. All the lay members attending this and the immediately following Synods were Maoris, so that proceedings were conducted in Maori. By 1865, the clergy of Waiapu Diocese numbered seven Europeans and eight Maoris. All the Maori clergy enjoyed full membership in the Synod and arrangements were made for Maori lay representation. There were both Maori and European cures within the diocese, the boundaries in some instances tending to overlap. (1)

HIS DUTIES AS BISHOP.

The newly appointed Bishop of Aotearoa entered upon his duties as Suffragan to the Bishop of Waiapu as from the date of his consecration. At that time there were some 18000 Maoris living within the Auckland Diocese, of whom 8000 claimed to be adherents of the Church of England. In the Waikato district the Maori population numbered about 11000, but few were communicants of the Church of England. For the main part they adhered to the Kingite and other political movements. The Maori population of the Waiapu Diocese, however, numbered 22000, and about 12500 were members of the Church of England. In the Wellington Diocese there were 3000 Maori members. Although far fewer in numbers, the scattered Maori settlements of the whole of the South Island claimed the care of the Bishop-Suffragan. He made his first South Island visit in October, 1929, conducting confirmation services for the first time

at outlying places like Bluff and Stewart Island. What a thrill this visit must have meant to the Maoris there, to receive direct the benediction of their own Maori Bishop! This extensive visitation on a nation-wide scale required fifteen months of almost continuous travelling, but Bishop Bennett made it his duty to meet all Maori members of the Church of England in every New Zealand diocese.

Then, five hundred miles to the east by sea lay the Chatham Islands, and to complete his first pastoral visitation, he set out for the Chathams in February, 1930. His stay there lasted seventeen days, during which time he conducted five confirmation services. He was greatly inspired by the interest and religious fervour displayed by the people, including members of both races, for his services were always crowded.

He returned from this visit on the 10th. of March, greatly refreshed and cheered by his experiences and overjoyed in the knowledge that the spiritual life of that far-away community had been enlivened. Distance tended to obliterate the real needs of the inhabitants of the Chathams, so that the Bishop's visit strengthened the bonds of fellowship and quickened the religious faith of both Maori and pakeha there.

IN PERILS IN THE SEA.

In August, 1930, the Bishop of Aotearoa went on a health-recruiting trip to Rarotonga, travelling aboard R.M.S. "Tahiti". Early in the morning of Friday the fifteenth of the month, the one-time troopship suffered a mishap, losing a propeller, and the propeller-shaft penetrating the hull. There were 128 passengers aboard, and the ship was then about 460 miles from Rarotonga.

After this serious mishap, Captain Toten and the whole ship's company displayed magnificent devotion to duty, as a result of which no life was lost. One of the passengers stated:

" Great good fortune attended us all thr/ough, for this
" might easily have been a terrible disaster, Twice
" before the "Ventura" arrived, hours before we expected
" her, Captain Toten ordered us away in the life-boats.
" It was a close call, for we just managed to cheat death."

Bishop Bennett said that the passengers became slightly nervous when a commotion was heard amongst the crew. They came on deck to don their life-preservers, and confidence was soon restored. "All hands were admirable in handling the situation. It was done so well that it seemed to lack direction."

Throughout Saturday the suspense continued, and on Saturday night the lights went out. From that time on flashlights and a few lanterns served the sleepless company.

The Bishop held church service on the Sunday morning, whilst the Norwegian steamer, "Penybryn" was faithfully standing by, and the Matson liner, "Ventura" came alongside about 1.30 p.m. and the passengers and crew transferred to her. (Extract from Press report dated 26th. August, 1930.)

OBSTACLES TO HIS WORK.

At the General Synod of 1928 the Standing Committee was empowered to establish a Maori Pastorate Board with powers to deal with Maori pastorates and all nominations for appointment thereto. But this Board was not established. At the General Synod held in 1933, in August, a Commission was set up to ascertain what should be done to bring the Maori sphere of work into a compact unity, and this Commission recommended

- " The establishment of the Maori Dioceses in 1937, and that for
- " the interim period a "Pastorate and Finance Board" should manage
- " the work carried on in the four dioceses of the North Island." (2)

The above recommendation was submitted to Synod in the following year, when it was decided that the Board proposed by the committee was impracticable at that time; but the opinion was unanimous that each diocese must be responsible for work among the Maoris of its own area. The need for cooperation between the several dioceses was stressed, in order that the Bishop of Aotearoa should be free to move about on his pastoral visitation unhindered by regional difficulties. This cooperation within the dioceses was vital to the successful reorganisation ~~xx~~ of Maori mission work. But the Bishop of Aotearoa has lacked the assistance of the Board whose establishment was proposed in 1933, owing to lack of interest on the part of various dioceses. Certain Bishops prefer to carry on the Maori pastoral work themselves, within their own areas, but full cooperation with the Bishop of Aotearoa, as the supervising authority, would, undoubtedly, be productive of encouraging results, both numerically and spiritually.

HIS IMPACTS UPON NEW ZEALAND LIFE.

The Bishop of Aotearoa has always sought, by his life and work, to be an apostle of truth and faith, and a warrior in the cause of justice and right. "Do what is right and fear nothing" is a message he has often declared to gatherings of New Zealand youth. And he supports the message by his

integrity of life, honesty of conviction and tenacity of purpose. By reason of his attractive personality and splendid qualities as an orator, he is always popular with youthful audiences. This is clearly evidenced by the large number of requests he receives from year to year to deliver the break-up addresses at various schools throughout the country. He always welcomes the opportunity to make contacts with young people.

He never fails to participate fully in the social activities of the community he serves. For example, in 1936, together with other interested helpers, he assisted in establishing the Hawke's Bay Historical Society, which, except for a period in recess owing to the recent War, has done much useful work. In 1938, he was elected President of the New Zealand Alliance. He is a member of the H.B. Radio Society, the Hastings Rotary Club, and for a time he was a member of Te Aute College Trust Board. He has never failed to foster interest in all forms of Maori arts and crafts, whilst he has donated cups for inter-tribal choir competition. Also, to promote pakeha interest in Maori affairs, he awarded handsomely carved native wood shields to both Napier and Hastings High Schools, for essay competitions yearly upon some aspect of Maori history, art or craft.

When he became president of the New Zealand Alliance in 1938, he made this appeal:

" I earnestly appeal to the people of New Zealand to find a
" remedy for this evil (the liquor traffic) for it was created
" by the pakeha, and introduced to the Maori by the pakeha.
" The Maori is unable to slay this taniwha (monster) except by
" voluntary abstinence, for he has no vote on the liquor question.
" But when you vote, pakeha brother or sister, will you visualise
" the position and danger to the Maori race of this traffic, and
" think of them as well as yourselves." (3)

Despite his successful efforts in 1904 in promoting legislation making it illegal for Maoris to purchase liquor for consumption off licensed premises, the Bishop still feels very keenly the continued breaking of the law in this regard. Addressing a meeting at Palmerston North on " The Liquor Question from the Maori Viewpoint", he said:

" What shall it profit a man if he lose his own soul?
" A man who loses his soul is lost himself. And yet,
" day by day, the drink traffic is eating into the soul
" of the nation." (4)

Whatever improvement has become noticeable in more recent years, in regard to drinking amongst Maoris, can largely be attributed to Bishop Bennett's courageous and consistent efforts for the moral and spiritual welfare of the Maori people as a whole.

CONTACTS BEYOND NEW ZEALAND.

In 1897, just prior to his ordination, Bishop Bennett made his first visit to Australia, when he went to see his father, then residing at Goulburn.

The centennial celebrations of the Diocese of Sydney in 1936, when the noble work of the Reverend Samuel Marsden was to be fittingly commemorated, made it opportune for the Bishop of Aotearoa to attend there with the Heretaunga Maori Choir. It was indeed most fitting that the Maoris should have some part in revering the memory of the first missionary to their people. Samuel Marsden had been Vicar of St. John's, Parramatta, and to this church Bishop Bennett presented a beautiful piece of greenstone set in copper and inscribed:

" This piece of greenstone is the gift of the Maori Church,
 " to serve as a link between New Zealand and Parramatta, and
 " as a perpetual witness to the gratitude of the Maori Christians
 " for the Gospel first proclaimed in their country by the Rev.
 " Samuel Marsden, at that time Rector of this parish. "

The General Committee of the Church Missionary Society in New South Wales wrote to thank Bishop Bennett and the choir for their participation, saying:

" The Committee records its great appreciation of the visit to
 " Australia of Bishop Bennett, the Revs. Panapa and H. Rangihu,
 " and the Maori Choir to take part in the Marsden Commemoration.
 " Bishop Bennett's addresses were most helpful and inspiring and,
 " together with those of his clergy, have given a greater mission-
 " ary outlook to many, whilst the grace of movement and the melod-
 " ious voices of the choir have given much pleasure. It is realised
 " that the Maoris hold Samuel Marsden in affectionate remembrance
 " on account of his work, in taking to them the Gospel Message of
 " Jesus Christ, the Saviour, and it is the earnest prayer of every
 " member of the Committee that the Maoris will ever nurture this
 " knowledge of Jesus Christ, and that they will live and work for
 " the extension of the Kingdom of God.

"
 "
 "

7th. August, 1936.

(sgd.) Hulme O. Moir,

Gen. Sec. " (5)

THE CONFERENCE AT MADRAS.

In 1938, Bishop Bennett was appointed as one of the representatives of the Church of England in New Zealand to attend the Missionary Conference at Madras, India. The Conference was held at Tambaram from the 12th. to the 29th. December, when 471 representatives from 69 different countries or territories were present. Three years of careful planning on the part of the Committee of the International Missionary Council and the National Christian

Churches enabled the Conference to record findings of the utmost importance to the Christian Ecumenical Movement. The report states:

" The delegates finished their work and sent their reports,
" findings and recommendations to the world, believing that
" they had, by God's grace, been able to participate in a
" common experience of which no resolutions or reports could
" be more than an inadequate expression. Yet it is believed
" that these findings will be worthy of careful study." (6)

The Conference at Madras was a great inspiration to Bishop Bennett, for he was there able to meet and confer with other Christian missionaries whose work was amongst native peoples in all parts of the world. Their unity of purpose in the great duty of Christian evangelisation was clearly revealed by the Conference. One young delegate said:

" This is indeed better than going to University, because
" Tambaram has opened up a new world to me. Men and women
" from churches still backward in education and leadership
" found, in meeting those from older and maturer churches,
" both of the East and West, a new meaning in Christian
" leadership and vision in world-wide fellowship. This
" alone is abundant justification for all the time, money
" and effort expended. " (7)

At the Conference, Bishop Bennett proved a worthy ambassador of his Church and his people. His knowledge of mission work in other lands was vastly widened and his faith for his own work in New Zealand deeply increased.

After the Conference he remained in India for some months, doing active mission work in many fields. He was present at the consecration and opening of the new cathedral at Dornakee, on February 6th., 1939. He made a careful study of the effect of Christian teaching upon the various Indian peoples, and he found this study most revealing, increasing his understanding of his own task, and fitting him still more adequately for his service as Bishop of Aotearoa.

En route from Tambaram, Bishop Bennett spent some time in Melbourne, delivering many public addresses upon Maori mission work in New Zealand. It can be said that this period spent abroad was to him a new phase of education and of new spiritual encouragement and insight.

A REVIEW OF HIS OWN FIELD.

The magnitude of the work in the field of Aotearoa is so extensive that, at times, it must have appeared to be almost insuperable. It was complex and beset with difficulties, calling for ungrudging sacrifice of time

and talent, and infinite patience. Life for him and his family has, necessarily been frugal, for private means have had to be used to enable him to perform the duties of his office. His loyalty to his Church has never flagged, and he has always maintained his outstanding characteristics of constant faith, catholicity of outlook, and quiet, unruffled repose.

He has sought at all times to safeguard the culture, customs and language of his race as a heritage in trust. He constantly urges their claims upon all Maori youth to preserve and maintain them unspoiled. To this end he has encouraged the formation of Maori Clubs throughout New Zealand to foster Maori arts and crafts. Today, he notes with pride the evidence of new vigour and vitality within his own race. By 1896 the Maori population of New Zealand had fallen to below 40000; but today, the Maori rate of natural increase, despite a heavier death rate, is far in excess of the white rate. The Young Maori Party has greatly helped to bring this result about, so that the Bishop feels that the Maori of today has become acclimatised to the new and unsettling conditions caused by contact with European civilisation. Said he:

" Today we find that the Maori is willing to be led by
" his great white brother. Our duty is to see that we
" place before the Maori people the very best of Christian
" civilisation." (8)

REFERENCES:

- (1) Proceedings of the Twentieth General Synod, 1934, pp. 290-294.
- (2) Ext. from Report of Committee appt'd. by the Standing Committee of General Synod, 1933, to consider desirable developments in Maori work, p.256.
- (3) From pamphlet published by the N.Z. Alliance, Wellington, 11/4/1938.
- (4) Report of address in Manawatu Standard, dated 20/9/1938.
- (5) Extract from letter in Bishop Bennett's collection.
- (6) "The World Mission of the Church", Report of Conference at Tambaram, 1938, p 11.
- (7) Extract from Bishop Bennett's address to Napier Rotary Club, 22/3/1947, reported in the Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune.
- (8) " The World Mission of the Church", p. 12.

THE LAST DECADE.

After his return from Madras and Melbourne, the Bishop of Aotearoa again took up his duties of office with renewed strength and enthusiasm. Then came the outbreak of World War Two, the conflict for freedom against Nazism, from the first day of September, 1939. New Zealand immediately declared herself on the side of the Mother Country in the fight for democracy, and the Maoris at once responded to the call to arms. The Maori Battalion was formed as a fighting unit and sailed to earn undying fame on the mainland of Greece, the Island of Crete and in the desert places of North Africa. Under General Montgomery's brilliant leadership, and as part of the New Zealand Division, they helped to drive the German Afrika Korps and the Italian Armies from El Alamein to Tunisia, to Sicily and through Italy to Venetia. Leading Maori elders unceasingly fanned the flame of enthusiasm for active service with Te Hokowhitu a Tu. Bishop Bennett, also, was unfailing in his inspiration and leadership in this call to duty in the cause of freedom for mankind.

His own family presents a proud War record, for seven of his sons rendered service in the Armed Forces:

Lt. Colonel C.M. Bennett, D.S.O., served with the Maori Battalion in Greece, Crete and North Africa. He commanded the battalion from El Alamein to Tunisia, being awarded the D.S.O. At Takrouna he was severely wounded, being invalided home in 1943.

Captain F.T. Bennett was also an original officer of the Maori Battalion, serving in Greece and Crete, where he was severely wounded. He commanded the Arawa Company in the first Libya campaign and was later appointed 2-I/C., Training Depot at Maadi.

Lieut. A.T. Bennett left New Zealand in 1943. He was in charge of the Arawa platoon at Cassino, where he was wounded and taken prisoner, being released at the close of the War.

Captain M.A. Bennett left in 1944 as padre to the Maori Battalion, serving throughout the campaign in Italy.

F/Lt. E.T. Bennett left New Zealand in 1941, gaining his commission during the campaign in North Africa. He served also in the R.A.F. in Italy, flying night fighters. On his return to England, he took part in the invasion of the continent, serving throughout the European campaign, commanding a flight of the N.Z. day-fighter squadron in the later stages. He suffered injuries and was mentioned in despatches.

Lieut. H.R. Bennett joined in 1944 and served as a medical officer in various camps in New Zealand, until the end of the War.

Sub/Lt. P.T. Bennett joined the Navy in 1944 as an able-seaman. He later gained his commission, being the first Maori to achieve this distinction.

The peace-time vocations of the several members of the Bishop's family include medicine, dentistry, education, the Church, nursing, engineering, carpentry and agriculture. Strong bonds of affection hold them together.

In a recent letter to his parents, Dr. Henry Bennett wrote:

" Into every one of us there has been inculcated the teachings
" of the Christian faith, and its influence is bound to guide
" us and help us along life's way. Your duties as parents, to
" teach and to guide, to protect and to provide during childhood
" and adolescence could not have been more conscientiously done.
" That knowledge and that satisfaction can be carried with you ~~th~~
" through the years. For all that you have been and have done,
" please accept the humble and sincere thanks of a grateful son." (1)

FIFTY YEARS OF LOYAL CHURCH SERVICE.

On August 24th., 1946, Bishop Bennett celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination, when he visited Nelson and was honoured at various gatherings there. He took the opportunity to present to the church at Motueka the beautiful carved altar given in his honour by the members of his family. This was a fitting renewal of affectionate association with his earliest pastoral work.

On the last day of the month he attended the celebrations organised by the Arawa tribe at Rotorua. Large audiences met in the great meeting-house, Tama te Kapua, on the marae at Ohinemutu. On Sunday, September 1st., Archbishop West-Watson conducted the morning service, and, acknowledging the wonderful hospitality of the Maori people, recalled the centenary celebrations at Waitangi, when the keynote struck was "We must be one people." (2) Their expressions of love and esteem for the Bishop of Aotearoa bore adequate testimony to his leadership in both temporal and spiritual matters.

Writing from Lambeth Palace on July 17th., the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Fisher, said:

" My dear Bishop,
" I hear from the Archbishop of New Zealand
" that in August of this year you are celebrating your jubilee
" in Holy Orders, and that on September 1st., the Archbishop
" will be present at Rotorua when your jubilee is celebrated
" among your own people.

" This is indeed a great occasion for them and for you.
" I have heard of the great work which you have done as
" Bishop, and of the ~~deep~~ affection and respect in which
" you are held. (DEEP)

" Across the seas I send you my greetings and good
" wishes, with gratitude to our Lord Jesus Christ for the
" work He has enabled you to do in the service of His
" Kingdom.

" May God's blessing rest upon you and upon all your
" people. To them, too, I send my greetings and my blessing.

" Yours sincerely,

" (sgd.) Geoffrey Cantuar. " (3)

During the course of the celebrations at Ohinemutu, the Primate suggested that the portrait of the Bishop of Aotearoa should be painted. The Arawa people immediately agreed, and the Under-Secretary for Native Affairs and Judge Harvey of the Native Land Court suggested that the various Land Boards might be allowed to bear the cost of the work, which was duly performed by the artist, Mr. Archibald Nicholl, of Christchurch, in November, 1947. A photographic copy of this portrait appears as the frontispiece of this thesis. At the special request of the Right Reverend N.A. Lesser, Bishop of Waiapu, and of the Curator of the Napier Museum, the portrait is at present hanging in the Art Gallery at Napier, prior to being sent to Rotorua.

THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE, 1948.

The Primate of New Zealand requested Bishop Bennett to attend the Lambeth Conference in July, 1948. To that great gathering they journeyed together. An encyclical letter from the Conference was read in all Anglican Churches of New Zealand on Sunday, October 10th. The letter stated:

" This is an hour of testing and peril for the Church, no less
" than for the world. But it is the hour of God's call to the
" Church. Thus the keynote of our message is encouragement to
" the people of God all over the world. For those who have
" eyes to see, there are signs that the tide of faith is beginning
" to come in. " (4)

Bishop Bennett is the first Maori delegate to attend at Lambeth. The honour is well merited, for he is a worthy ambassador of his people. Though his stay in Britain has been brief, he has preached in many churches in England and Scotland, and has addressed students at several schools and training colleges.

On June 20th. he preached at Westminster Abbey, and in a letter to his family said:

" On the 20th. I went to Westminster Abbey for Holy Communion
" at 8 o'clock, and in the afternoon met the Archbishop of
" Manitoba and the native doctor of Ceylon and his wife. In
" the evening I preached at Westminster Abbey to a large congregation.
" Although it was a severe ordeal, I am thankful to say that it all
" passed off well. I am not in the position to say much about it,
" but others will be able to give you information. " (5)

He preached from the text: " Behold I bring you good tidings" and referred to the Maori mission work in New Zealand, and of New Zealand's gratitude to the C.M.S. for introducing the Christian Gospel to the Maori people.

WORLD CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES AT AMSTERDAM.

In August he attended the World Conference of Churches at Amsterdam, where delegates from all Christian fields of service gathered to plan the prosecution of new undertakings for the furtherance of the Christian faith throughout the world. These Conferences were truly inspirational to the Bishop of Aotearoa.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLIED TO MAORI BIBLE REVISION.

A special committee was recently set up to carry out a revision of the translation of the Bible into Maori, and the Bishop of Aotearoa is a member of that committee. His grandfather, Mr. John B. Bennett, the first Registrar-General of New Zealand, was in his day secretary of the Bible translation committee, representative of the Church of England and of the Methodist Missionary Societies.

The task of revision has been arduous, but it is now nearing completion. It was necessary because many forms of expression current in the earlier days have since fallen into disuse. The revision will provide the Maori of today with an up-to-date translation worthy of the Book which brings to him counsel, consolation and the very light of life.

Co-workers with the Bishop of Aotearoa in this undertaking are Sir Apirana Ngata, The Very Reverend J.G. Laughton, Mr. W. W. Bird, late Inspector of Native Schools, and the Revs. W.N. Panapa, E. Tetuhi and D. Kaa.

HIS MAJESTY BESTOWS THE HONOUR OF C.M.G.

In the New Year's Honours for 1948, His Majesty the King was graciously pleased to confer upon Bishop Bennett the Honour of Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George. This Honour bears the hall-mark of His Majesty's high esteem and won universal approval. Congratulatory messages came to the Bishop from all over New Zealand, for this Honour was indeed unique for a member of the Clergy. Moreover, Bishop Bennett has had the supreme joy of receiving the Honour from His Majesty in person, whilst attending the Conference at Lambeth.

The British High Commissioner in New Zealand said:

" May I on the strength of our all too brief acquaintance offer
" you my best felicitations on the Honour bestowed upon you by
" His Majesty in today's Honours list? I have not been a great time
" in this land, but long enough to have some awareness of the service
" to God and mankind which has been your life-long devoted offering.
" I am sure that many people up and down New Zealand, and not only
" your own people, will feel a sense of satisfaction that our Sovereign
" has made you this signal token of recognition. And what form
" could it better take in a case like yours than that you should be
" enrolled in the Order of the Fighting Saints?
"

" My warmest congratulations to you: and may I wish you as well
" every happiness in the New Year?
"

Yours sincerely,

" (sgd.) PATRICK DUFF. " (6)

It was indeed a fitting and worthy honour for the Bishop of Aotearoa to receive toward the close of this last decade of his long life of lofty, selfless service to the Maori people of New Zealand. Love and devotion to duty have marked all his undertakings, as he has pointed them to the "more excellent way". He has spoken as a prophet: " Be not conformed, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." He has consistently set before them the good example of the husbandman of crops as well as of souls; and by his fearless faith as a reformer has stirred them to renewed action in the cause of right and truth. The torch he would hand on to them is the duty of guarding and safe-guarding all that is worthy and worth while in their past great heritage of culture, custom, language and tradition.

SOME FACETS OF HIS CHARACTER AND FEATURES.

Steeped in the folk-lore of his people, his every utterance carries colour. He aims at nothing spectacular. His simplicity and frugality are revealed in his family life at Kohupatiki. His home is unadorned on floors and walls save for a few mats and photographs and treasured mementos.

Hep is a compound of "simples". His sermon preached in Westminster tells us this. In conversation, he puts his hearer immediately at ease. He shows neither fuss nor formality nor straining for effect. He is no boaster.

Sturdy of frame and stocky of build, he carries himself with assurance and confidence. He neither drinks alcohol nor smokes tobacco, and he helps to maintain his general fitness by his daily walks for miles by road or field.

His kindly laughing eyes light a full and smoothly rounded face, even now but slightly lined; whilst his resonant voice and benignity of bearing reveal to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear the unruffled calm of that inward peace which passes human understanding.

His gracious wife, true daughter of the Arawa tribe, tends him with devoted care, and by her dignity of bearing helps to sustain him in all his tasks of life.

It has been my privilege and joy to live within his home, to attend the family prayers that mark the daily round, and to obtain thereby such a close-up of this good man who, "In the office of bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince." So stated the Apostle Paul.

In his service to his Maori people it can be truly said that Frederick Augustus Bennett, Bishop of Aotearoa, has helped to inspire them with sound doctrine and, like the prophet Isaiah of old, has urged them "To lengthen their cords and strengthen their stakes" in their island home of Aotearoa.

REFERENCES:

- (1) Letter written by Dr. Henry Bennett on Dec. 20th., 1946.
- (2) Archbishop West-Watson's address reported in Rotorua Chronicle 2/9/46.
- (3) Extract from Bishop Bennett's letters.
- (4) Ext. from Lambeth encyclical letter reported in Evening Star, Dunedin.
- (5) Letter from Bishop Bennett dated 11/7/48. (6) Letter from Sir Patrick Duff.

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS.

FRONTISPIECE .

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Bishop Bennett is wearing his robes of office.

CHAPTER 1.

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3. Memorial stone at Maketu, marking the landing place of the Arawa canoe.
4. Inset stone tablet.
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6. Bishop Bennett photographed on site of the church at Te Wairoa.
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10. Bishop Suter.
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12. Opening day at the school at Putiki.
13. The church at Motueka, erected through the efforts of Bishop Bennett.
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16. MEMORIAL CHURCH AT PAKI PAKI.

17. THE MAORI BIBLE REVISION COMMITTEE.

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(b) March 6th., 1897.

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THESIS No. 104

THE RIGHT REVEREND

FREDERICK AUGUSTUS BENNETT, C.M.G.

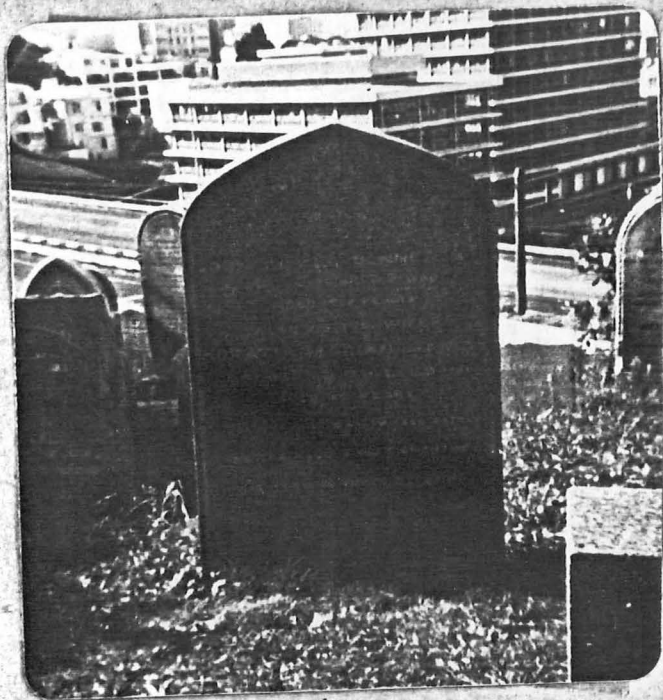
BISHOP OF AOTEAROA

APPENDIX : PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS

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(compiled by Father David Bennett, (grandson) of Rotorua)





In loving memory of
John Boyle Bennett M.D

who died June 13th 1860⁸
aged 72 years

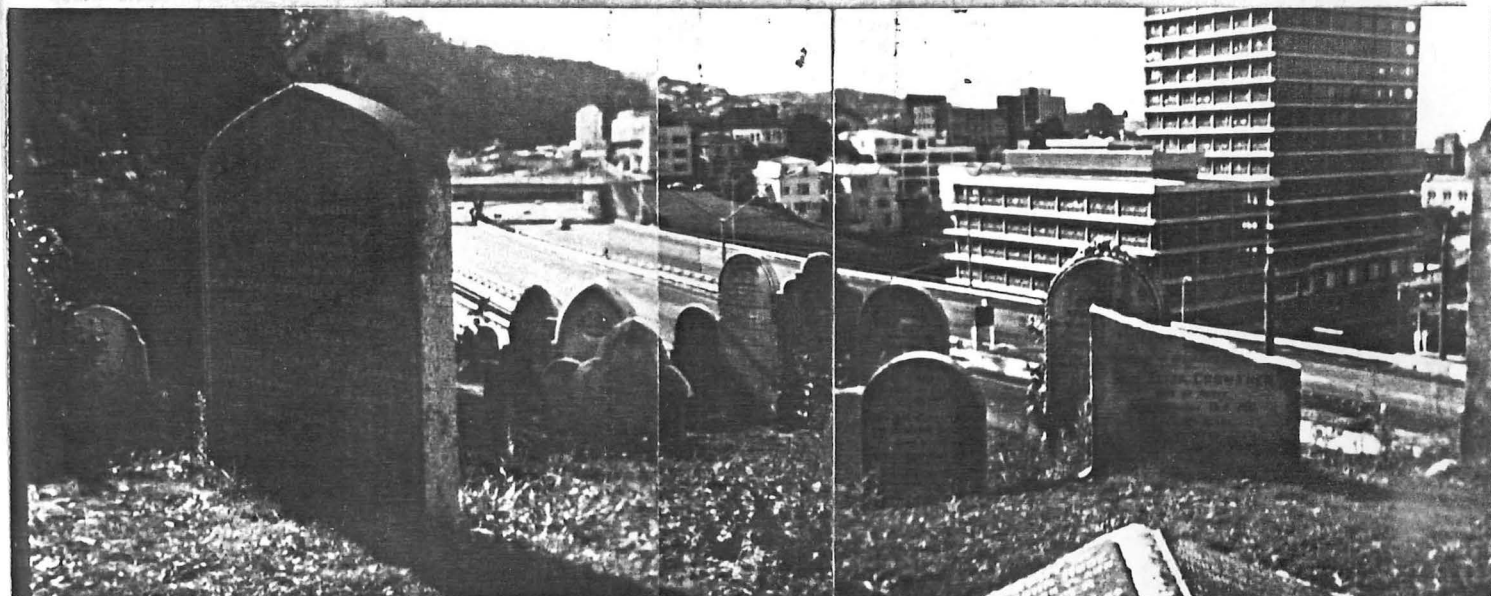
also of his wife
Horatia Maria Bennett

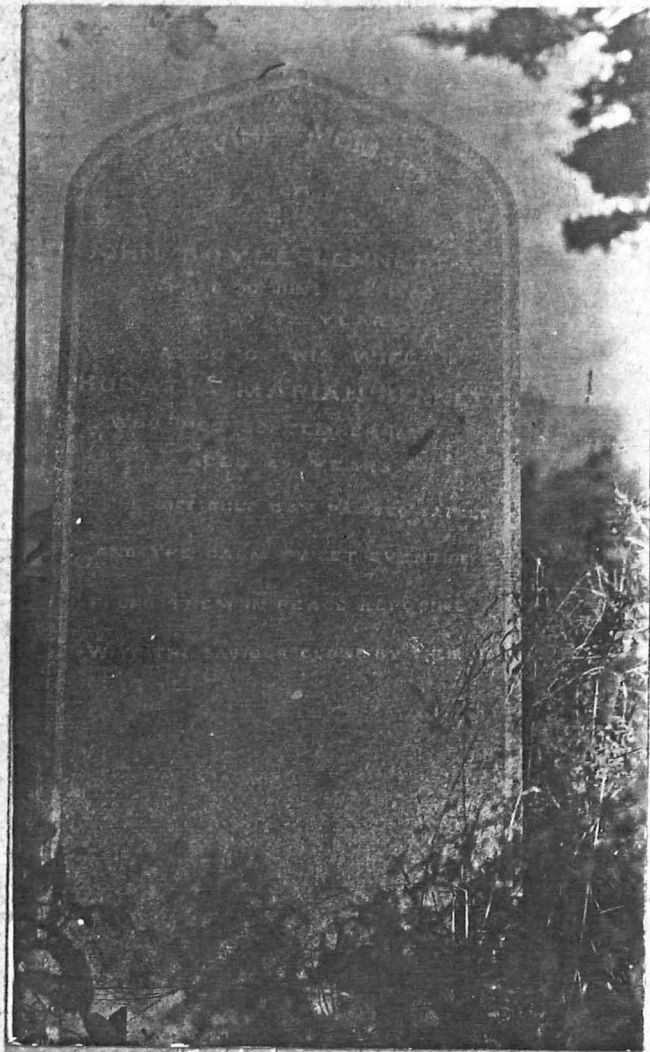
who died September 1880¹ / 52
Aged 69

The diffident day passed safely
And the calm must eventually
Sound them in peace reposing
With the saviors close by their side!!

Am N. 2. 1849

(Tombstone inscription
written by Rt. Rev F.A. Bennett)
Photo taken in Belton Rd cemetery. Headstone
they moved to make way for motorway. Now
located on side of motorway.

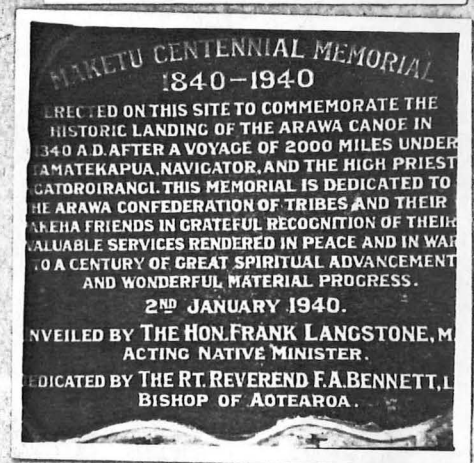




(2)



13



4



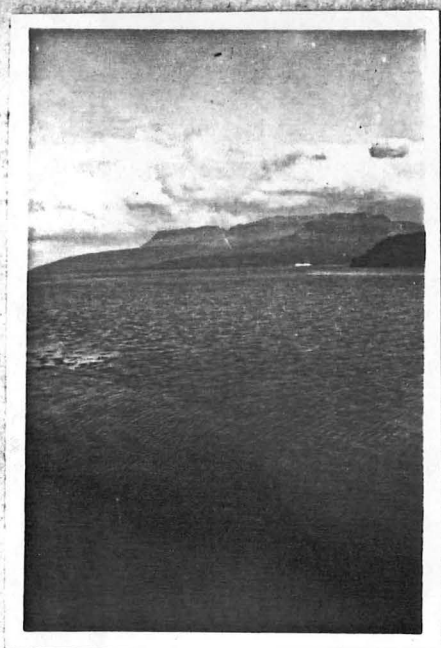
~~Penlington~~

W.A.C.P (Mr. W.A.C. Penlington, Havelock North (H.B.)

6



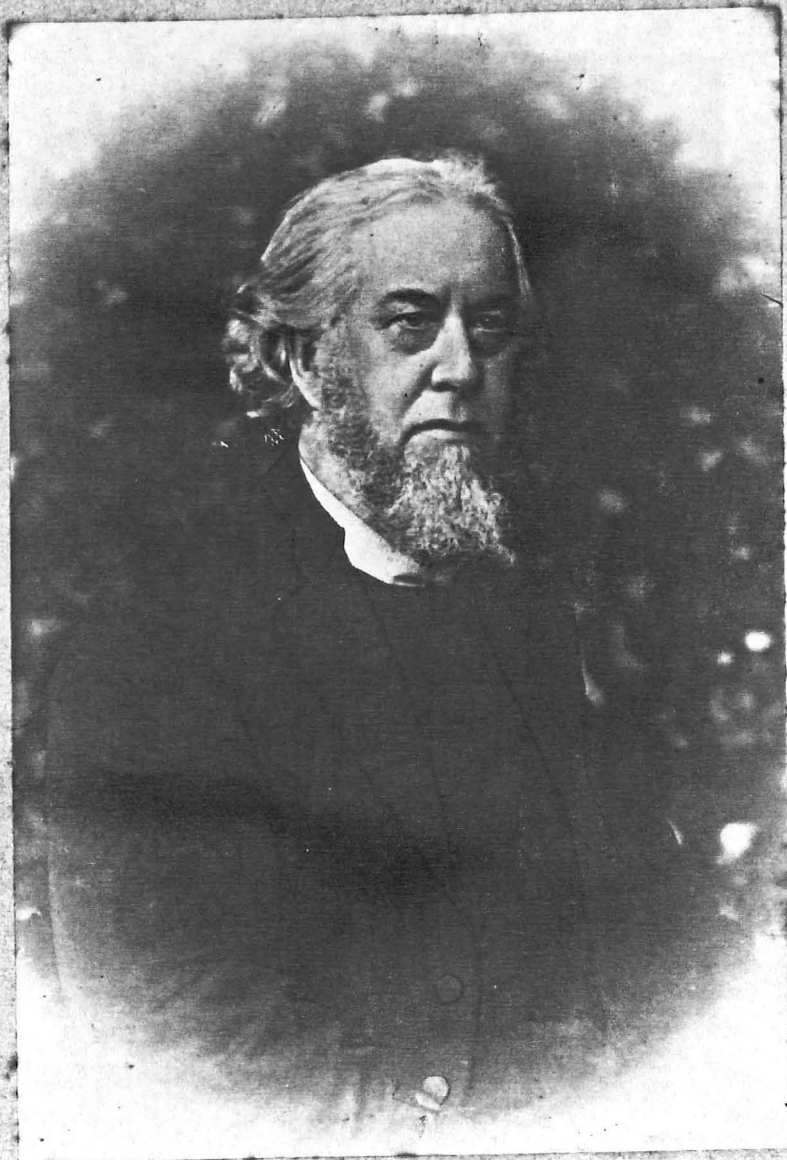
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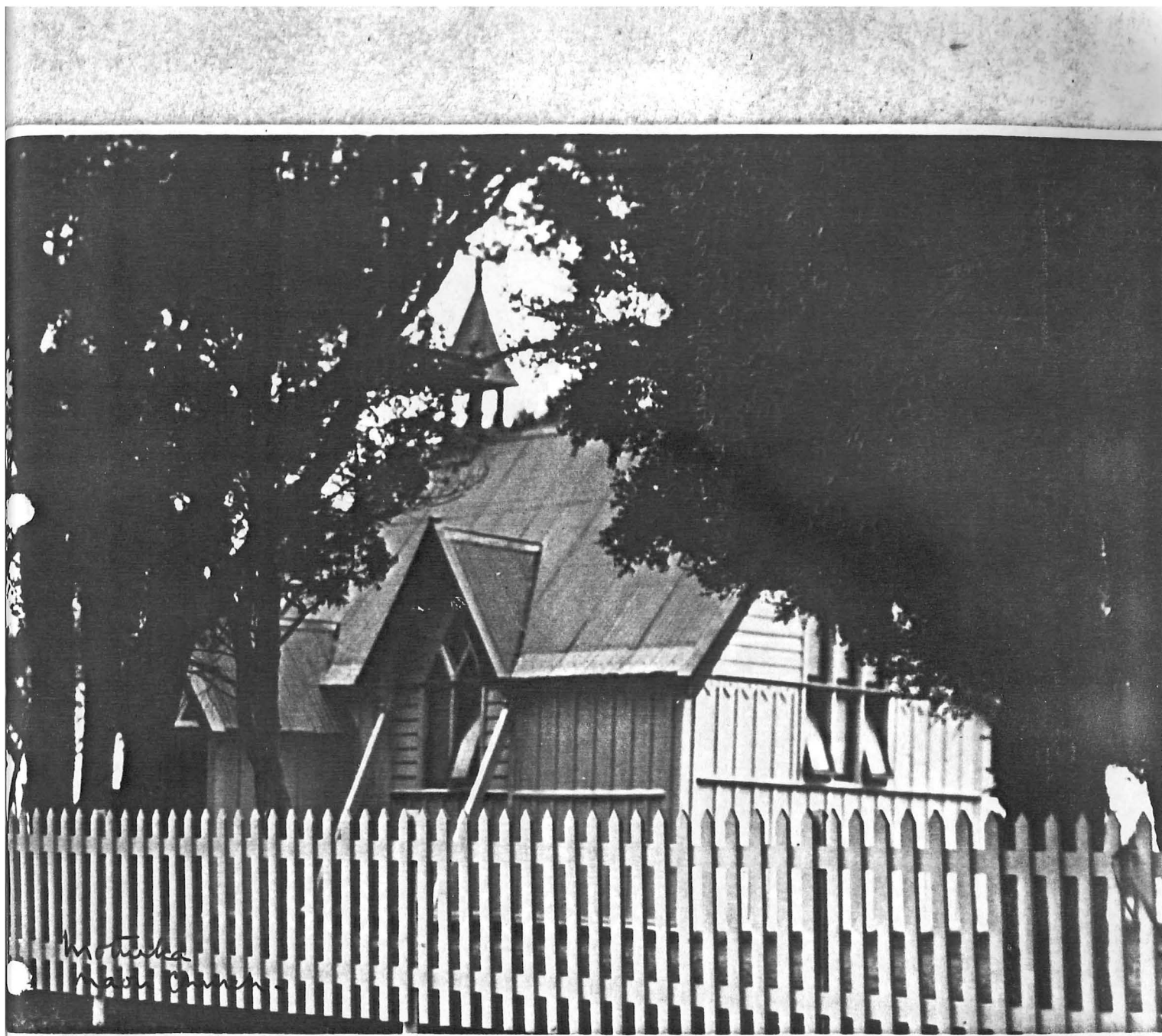


11



Pūtiki school -
1892.

12



Mottika
Mad Church.

13



Thanksgiving Communion Table 14
 presented by self and family to Motueka Church
 during my jubilee of ordination.

1896 - 1946.



Maori Mission Church Ohinemutu Rotorua N.Z. Blencowe 3.

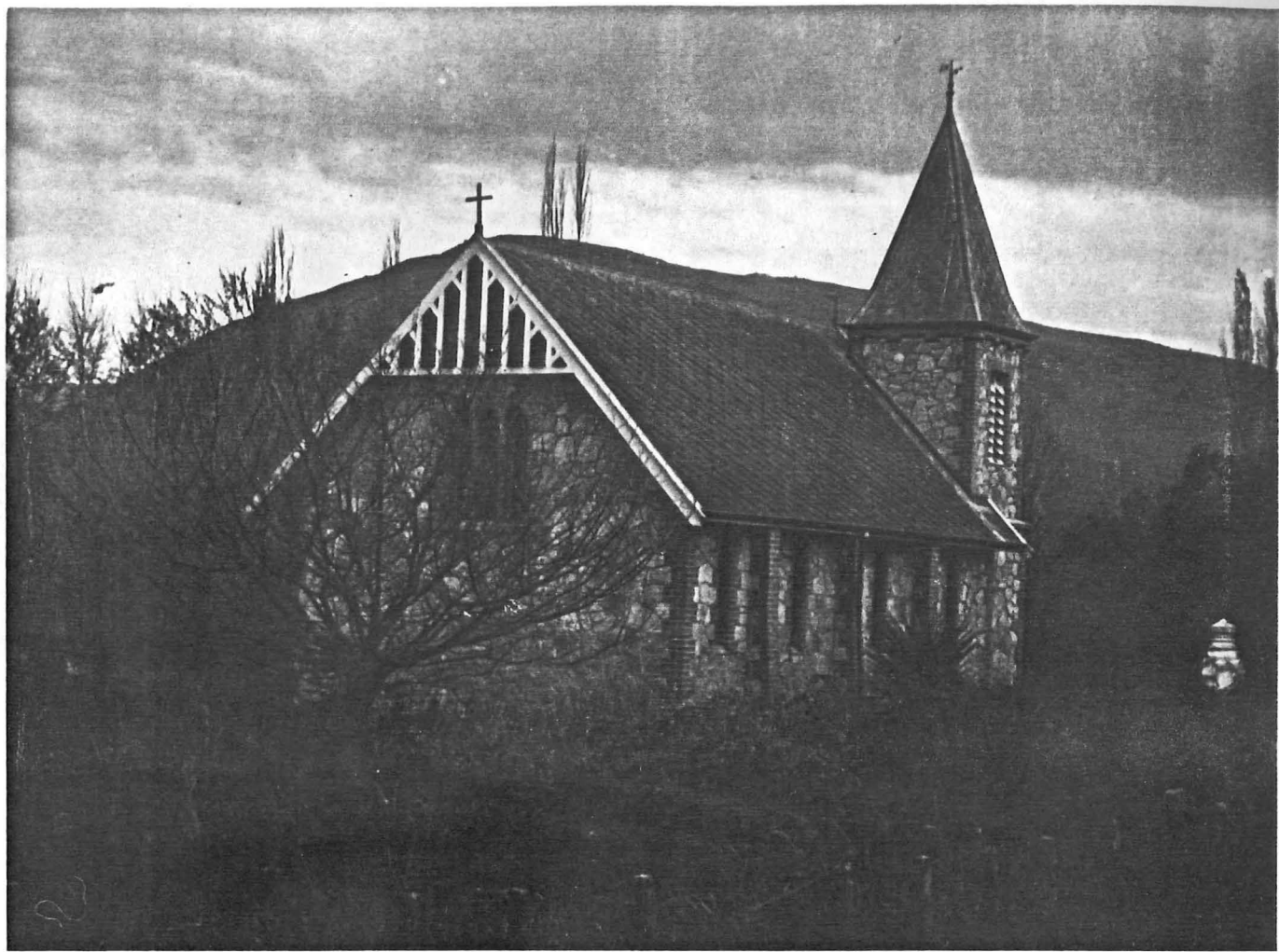


Maori Mission Church Looking towards entrance : Blencowe 10



Maori Mission Church Looking towards Chancel : Blencowe 7.

15



16

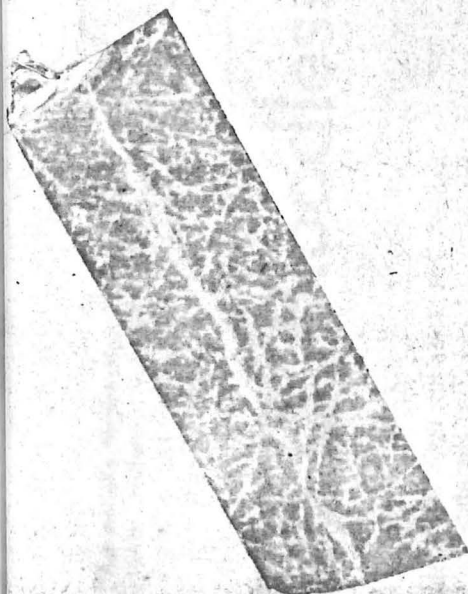


THE MAORI BIBLE REVISION COMMITTEE

From left—Mr. W. W. Bird, The Rt. Rev. Bishop Bennett, C.M.G., The Very Rev. J. G. Laughton, Sir Apirana Ngata and Revs. W. N. Panapa, E. Tetuhi and D. Kaa

By courtesy of The N.Z. Herald

17



An artist's impression of the Rimutaka railway disaster, redrawn from a sketch published in the Weekly News in 1880.



the province owing to the steep gradients used in carrying the line over the ranges. The cost of constructing the line was enormous, and the cost of working is also very great. In several places the train is exposed to tremendous gusts of wind which are frequent there.

In the old coaching days travelling had sometimes to be stopped owing to the tempests, and apparently even loaded trains are not safe.

1881 Bloodless End to the Affair at Parihaka

NEW PLYMOUTH, November 5, 1881

NEARLY 2000 men of the Armed Constabulary and volunteers marched on Parihaka Pa this morning to arrest the chief Te Whiti and those of his followers who have been illegally fencing the roads built through confiscated land and in other ways obstructing and molesting the settlers.

When the troops arrived, rather exhausted from their tramp in heavy marching order in extremely warm weather, the natives, about 2500 in number, were found squatting on the ground in the marae, where they had been all night.

Before the troops came in sight a chief of the Ngatiawas addressed the assemblage and cautioned them not to use any violence.

At 9 o'clock the skirmishers of the Armed Constabulary had taken up position, accompanied by the Minister of Lands, Mr Rolleston, and the Minister of Native Affairs, Mr Bryce. The former was on foot while the latter was mounted on a white horse.

The Maoris still kept their squatting posture with the exception of the young girls, who were enjoying themselves with skipping ropes, and the boys, who were playing in front of the pa. None appeared the least afraid at the approach of the constabulary. At 8.35 Major Tuke and Mr Butler,



Members of the Armed Constabulary preparing for the march on Parihaka.

secretary to Mr Bryce, came into the pa. The former gentleman, addressing the natives, said: "We have come to hear Te Whiti's reply to the proclamation issued to him." After an interval of five minutes, and there being no reply, Major Tuke read the Riot Act, calling on all the natives to disperse.

Te Whiti's chief lieutenant, Tohu, then addressed the people, saying: "Let the man who raised the war do his work this day; let none of us stir lest any of us be absent. Be patient and steadfast and even if the bayonet comes to your breast do not resist." The natives then agreed a passage for those who, advising to where

Te Whiti was seated, arrested without the slightest resistance.

Te Whiti and Tohu are now lodged in the blockhouse at rehu

November 1, 1879

THE Premier, Mr Hall, moving the second reading of the Qualification of Electors Bill in the House yesterday, said the intention of the Government was to apply the principle of manhood suffrage by giving the franchise to every male over the age of 21.

"The bill," he said, "proposes to

abolish the existing property qualification of a £50 freehold, the leasehold, the household, the lodgers and the ratepayers' franchise—which qualifications constituted a not illiberal franchise—and it will simplify the subject by providing that every man who has resided twelve months in the colony shall have the right to vote.

"We propose, in addition to the resi-

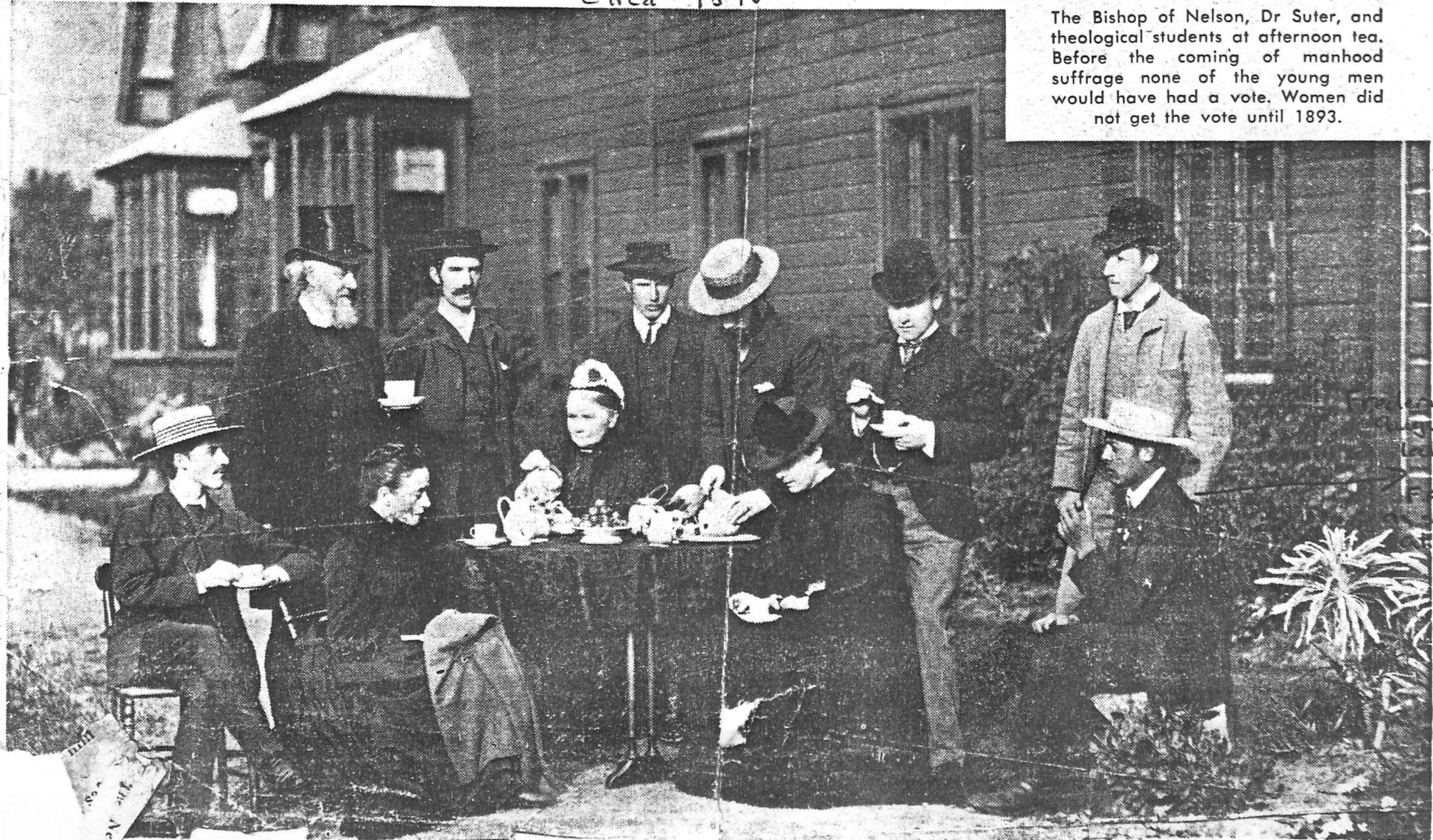
dential qualification, to provide that every man having a freehold property, whether encumbered or unencumbered—in this respect the bill is more liberal than any previous law—shall have the right to vote. That is a moderate recognition of the rights of property."

Mr Pitt said that in a House so strongly imbued with liberalism he

was astonished that nothing had been said about extending the franchise to women.

Mr Seddon: "I hope honourable members will not allow any clause giving the ladies the franchise to be inserted in this bill. All domestic felicity would be destroyed once the ladies commenced to dabble in politics."

Circa 1890



The Bishop of Nelson, Dr Suter, and theological students at afternoon tea. Before the coming of manhood suffrage none of the young men would have had a vote. Women did not get the vote until 1893.

Handwritten notes on the right side of the photo:
Bishop
A Bennett
Bishop

ord, November 13, 1879

Handwritten notes at the bottom of the photo: "H. (1890) B. (1890) Seated near the..."

TE WHAKAPAPA O TE WHAANAU A BENNETT

